

BOB FITCH ON WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON

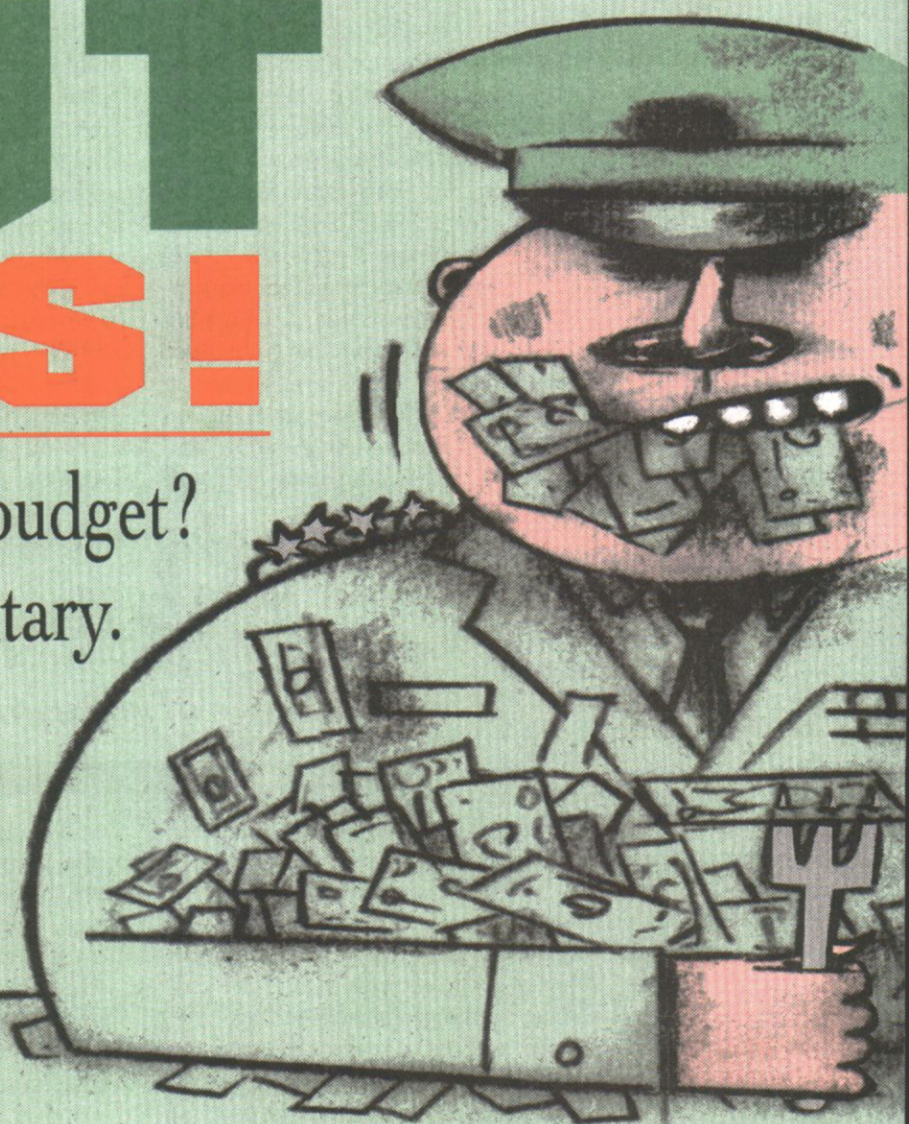
December 9-22, 1996

IN THESE TIMES

CUT THIS!

Want a balanced budget?
Start with the military.

Joel Bleifuss reports



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CANADA, MEXICO AND EUROPE ARE
MAD AS HELL ABOUT HELMS-BURTON.
NOW THEY'RE GETTING EVEN.

Wayne S. Smith reports

EDITORIAL

BALANCED BUDGET
SHIBBOLETH

The most generous interpretation of President Clinton's solemn vows to balance the federal budget is that he is trying to head off a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. But even if we grant him this honorable motive, Clinton—along with the Democratic members of Congress who share his goal—has fallen into a Republican trap. For four years, Clinton has played unprincipled games designed to assure his reelection. Now that he has run his last campaign, his supporters should hold him to a higher standard. Changing the budget is more important than balancing it, because the budget's current structure guarantees that each step taken in the direction of balance will reduce or eliminate federal programs that help support working people and their families. Federal budget-balancing measures will also have a negative impact on the budgets and social programs of all 50 states.

The shibboleth of a balanced budget is a Reagan legacy. It is an idea promoted by those who have relentlessly ratcheted back social programs designed to provide Americans with a measure of security, comfort and safety. Reagan cut taxes and dramatically stepped up military spending in order to incur increasing deficits and a monstrous federal debt. He thus created a situation in which he could claim that government spending was so out of control that it could be stopped only by constitutional restrictions. Military spending was in fact the culprit, but Reagan placed the blame on social spending.

Clinton has done little or nothing to reverse this process. Instead, he has obsequiously bowed to the greed of "defense" contractors and timidly followed the lead of their advocates in Congress. The result: a budget that places a wall around military spending while leaving all other discretionary programs vulnerable. This includes everything from the FBI and the IRS to environmental protection and food stamps, as well as the 30 percent of discretionary spending that now flows to the states to help pay for programs such as Medicare. Since the FBI and IRS

are not likely to be cut, either federal social programs will absorb further cutbacks or transfers to state governments will be reduced. If state funding is hit, governments will either have to raise local and state taxes, or make further across-the-board cuts in state and municipal programs.

These cutbacks will occur even if the economy continues to expand at its present rate. When—not if—the next recession hits, things will get much worse, since revenues will go down and social needs will go up.

When he took office in 1993, Clinton made the argument that more federal spending was needed for investment. Unfortunately, rather than using his bully pulpit to educate the public about the importance of public investment, he abandoned the idea when it failed to grab people's attention and met with corporate opposition. Clinton's acquiescence had broad repercussions. Understanding the distinction between current expenses and investment is essential for a successful argument against balanced-budget proponents. If the argument were forcefully made, the public could easily be persuaded of the importance of government borrowing for public investment. Families, as well as most state governments, already make allowances for investments in their own budgets. When a family buys a house for \$100,000, it only budgets the down payment and takes out a mortgage for the rest (usually \$80,000 to \$90,000). The same, in most cases, applies to buying a new

car, or paying for a child's college tuition. Similarly, most states that have mandatory balanced budgets set up special funds, usually paid for with bonds, for capital investments.

Like private investment, public investment contributes to productivity and growth, despite the absence of immediate

private profit. Expenditures for children on Head Start, primary and secondary education, loans for college students, health care, basic research, the maintenance of our physical infrastructure, and the protection of our environment are essential for society's long-term well-being.

All of this, and much more, is threatened by Clinton's abandonment of the most rudimentary principles of government responsibility in a modern society. The issue, of course, is not really government spending and balancing the budget. It is social priorities and the purpose of government. The Republicans favor government spending only insofar as it protects or enhances corporate profitability. Clinton has joined their ranks. His supporters in the recent election had little choice but to hold their noses and go along. But now they must assert themselves and reaffirm the principle of government as a counterbalance to corporate power. ◀

Behind the balanced budget debate lie real questions about social priorities and the purpose of government.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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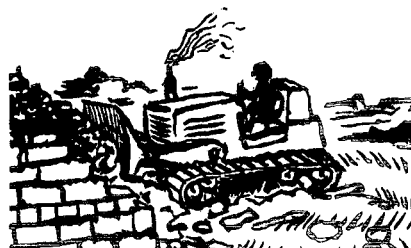


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LETTERS

Mindless courage

I have long been an admirer of *In These Times*' pithy writing, but Kim Phillips' review of Kristin Luker's book on teenage pregnancy ("Papa don't preach," September 16) struck me as an outstanding string of flawed reasoning.

Take, for instance, this example of Phillips' cheerleading for teen pregnancy: "Speaking from personal experience, at the University of Chicago I knew a wealthy girl who had given birth at age 18; her parents bought her an apartment in a co-op and paid for a full-time live-in nanny, and she's now on her way to medical school."

What can this possibly prove except that the rich have always, and will always, do as they please? Does Phillips really imagine that such exam-

ples have any bearing on the lives of poor teenage mothers who are just getting by on their own, and now have another life to be responsible for? As the Planned Parenthood poster puts it: Teenage pregnancy is like being grounded for the next 20 years. Think of yourself when you were 18; can you honestly say that you were ready for this awesome task?

Phillips goes on to wax melodramatic about the "courageous" act of giving birth early and often. She lauds those teen moms who choose "family over self, putting faith in love rather than in cold, calculating reason" and who have been unfairly singled out for attack by all segments of society.

It may be true that some teenagers have babies because they want unconditional love, rather than the "cold reason" of society. Nevertheless, like it

or not, we are biological beings, with multifaceted physical, medical, psychological and social needs. Children don't simply survive on "faith" or "love." If that were true, there would be no child abuse, child labor, child hunger, etc. To refuse to identify and grapple with these very real problems reaches the very pinnacle of social irresponsibility.

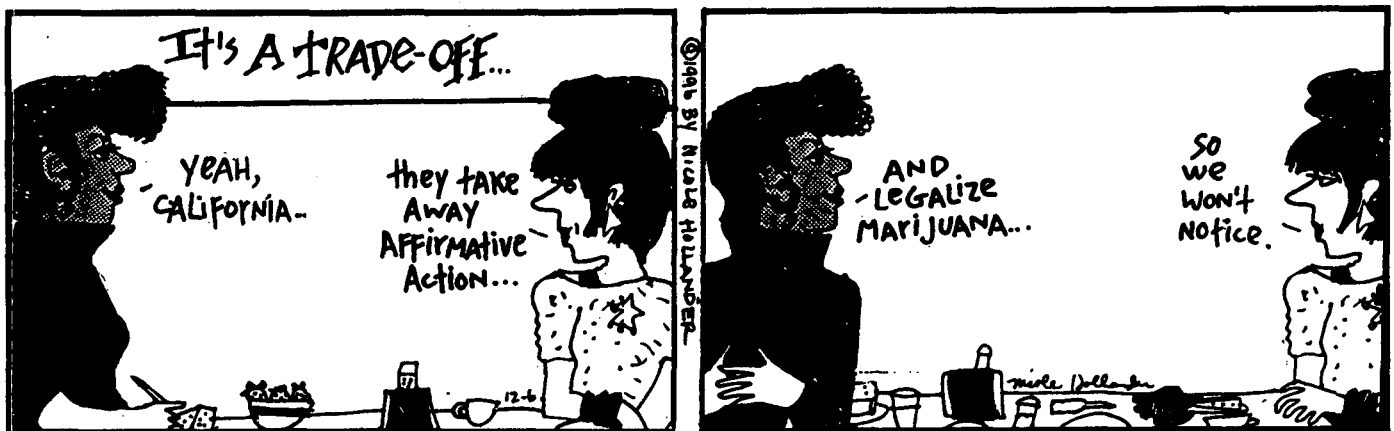
Since Alexander Cockburn made it fashionable to speak up for the "courageous" choice of teenage pregnancy (see *The Nation*, April 19, 1994), an appalling number of otherwise intelligent people have jumped on this bandwagon. It is one thing to defend the disadvantaged and the defenseless, a heading under which teenage mothers frequently fall. It is another thing entirely to become a cheerleader for teen pregnancy by attempting to "prove" that it is a good idea for 18 year olds who barely know themselves to bring yet another life into the world. Kim Phillips crossed over this line.

It may not be in fashion to quote John Stuart Mill on pregnancy. However, the closing section of *On Liberty* contains some of the best wisdom on the matter:

The fact itself, of causing the existence of a human being, is one of the most responsible actions in the range of human life. To undertake this responsibility—to bestow a life which may be either a curse or a

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



blessing—unless the being on whom it is to be bestowed will have at least the ordinary chance of a desirable existence, is a crime against that being. And, in a country, either overpopulated or threatened with being so, to produce children, beyond a very small number, with the effect of reducing the reward of labor by their competition is a serious offense against all who live by the remuneration of their labor.

Bill McCormick
Charlottesville, Va.

Kim Phillips replies: *The argument of my review—and Luker's book—was that although teenage mothers are often treated as though their childbearing decisions are one of the primary causes of inner-city poverty, having a child as a teen has relatively little impact on a woman's life chances overall. The employment, education and quality of life available to a young woman depend more on her class background than on the age at which she chooses to have children. What's more, I'm not sure that the children of older women—who live in the same decrepit buildings, go to the same overcrowded schools and have the same lousy jobs waiting for them when they grow up—really have a much easier road ahead of them just because their mothers waited to have children.*

Raising children is an awesome task; McCormick may be right that access to material resources, rather than love, is the most important factor determining a child's general well-being. Which is exactly why it doesn't make much sense to complain about how "irresponsible" teen mothers are; the grim reality of class is that it's hard to escape through the exercise of self-control.

Of course, John Stuart Mill wasn't talking just about teenage mothers, and maybe McCormick isn't either. Mill thought that poor people were responsible for their own low wages, since they foolishly insisted on having too many children. If I'm reading McCormick's letter right, he believes

that it should be considered a "crime" for a poor woman to bear a child. McCormick is just repeating one of the uglier tenets of liberal ideology: that it's socially irresponsible for poor women to have children at all. Given the popularity of AFDC reforms that are supposed to provide poor women with "disincentives" to having children, I'd have to say it looks like Mill is very much in fashion these days after all.

Grow up!

I know how difficult it is to publish *In These Times*, and you have my support and sympathy. But Laura McClure's article ("Labor and academe cozy up," October 28) on the Columbia University labor teach-in, at which John Sweeney and other AFL-CIO leaders spoke, was too much to take. Raising the level of consciousness of the working class is our task. Debating issues is part of that, of course. But lambasting an event that workers should be proud of is infantile leftism of a kind *In These Times* usually avoids.

Carl Shier
Retired Workers Chapter
United Auto Workers, Local 6
Stone Park, Ill.

Nailing Newt

Ken Silverstein's otherwise excellent review of my book on Newt Gingrich ("The art of sleaze," November 11) is marred by a flaw many leftists share: an overriding hatred of Bill Clinton. Indeed, Silverstein devotes half of his review to excoriating the traitorous Clinton, rather than Gingrich, as the source of all evil.

We all know Clinton is a corrupt centrist who bends to any political influence, and he did largely cave in on



welfare, health care and many other issues. Nonetheless, it's naive to dismiss the president and the speaker as mere equivalents: Clinton stood up to Gingrich numerous times—and the country is better off for it.

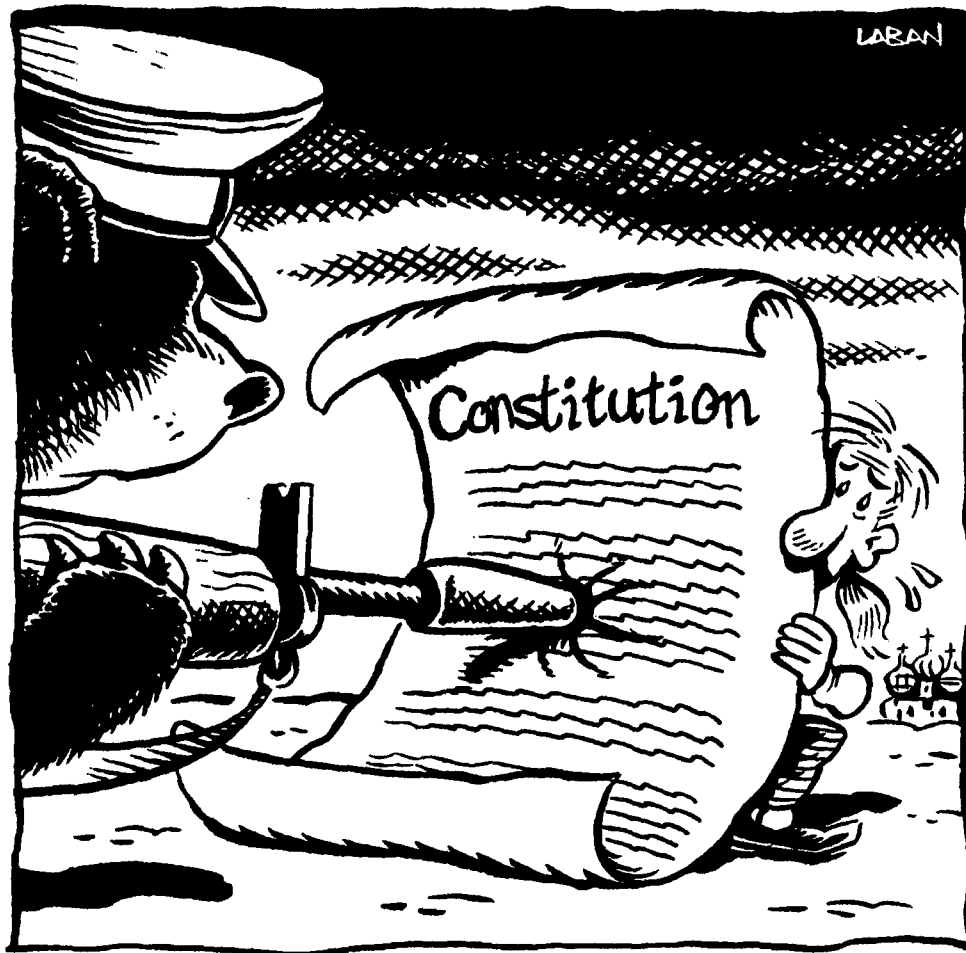
Silverstein seems to think I am a Democratic National Committee robot who wants to whitewash Whitewater and defend the Democrats at every turn. Not so. I am pleased to see all the scrutiny of Whitewater and the other Democratic scandals. What bothers me (and even bothers Silverstein) is the fact that Gingrich has thus far escaped censure for his misdeeds. As I argue in my book, Gingrich's misconduct has been far worse than Bill Clinton's in Whitewater, in terms of the amount of money involved, the extent of government corruption and, most important, the impact on American politics.

Obviously, American politics was corrupt before Newt Gingrich took control of the House, and he's not the only miscreant in Washington. But he symbolizes everything that is wrong with our government—and is the direct cause of much of it.

John K. Wilson
Chicago

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you wished to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

INSHORT



Dodging the Russian draft

Called up to serve in the Russian army, Ilya Zanegin is trying to obtain a court order that will force the generals to read their country's constitution. "This has always been a land where fine words are scribbled on paper, but nothing changes in life," says the long-haired and goateed 21-year old student, who has kept one step ahead of the military police for the past year. "The constitution of Russia tells me I have a right to perform non-military alternative service, but a bunch of big guys at my local induction center tell me I have

to go into uniform or into jail."

Zanegin is one of the estimated 31,000 young men currently evading conscription into Russia's crumbling, cash-strapped and catastrophe-prone armed forces. So far this year, 500 of them have been caught and charged, and 60 sent to prison, the daily *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* reported recently. Unlike most Russian draft dodgers, Zanegin refuses to lie low and hope they don't find him. He has gone public to challenge the army's traditional claim on two years of every young man's life. "I am scared to death," he says. "But if nobody takes a stand, we will be treated like animals forever."

Russia's constitution, authored by President Boris Yeltsin and adopted by national referendum in 1993, guarantees the right to "alternative civic service" to any citizen whose "personal or religious convictions are not compatible with military service." When he was running for re-election last spring, Yeltsin pledged to phase out conscription entirely by the year 2000.

Zanegin says that when he read that constitutional provision to the officers at his first draft hearing a year ago, they laughed and accused him of making it up. When he declined to sign the induction papers, they put out an order for his arrest. He responded by filing suit against the army in a local court, arguing that it must obey

Russia's supreme law and provide an alternative or else let him go free. Almost a year later, Zanegin is still awaiting a date for his court hearing.

"I know this sounds strange to foreigners, but in Russia it is commonplace for the law to order one thing and the state machinery and police to do the opposite," says Sergei Sorokin, a prominent critic of the military and Zanegin's legal adviser. "Ilya Zanegin is up against the habits of centuries."

A recent poll conducted by the Defense Ministry found that more than 50 percent of draft-age men would take alternative service if it were available, and only 10 percent believed doing a stint in the military was their patriotic duty.

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"There is a constitutional item that talks about alternative service, but there is as yet no law spelling out how it should work and no facilities for putting it into practice," says a military official, who asked not to be named. "In these circumstances, men who demand alternative service are really just trying to avoid performing their citizen's duty to serve in the armed forces. This cannot be permitted, and they will be punished."

The Kremlin's recently-fired security chief, Alexander Lebed, repeatedly warned that Russian conscripts are malnourished, unpaid, ill-clothed, lice-ridden and possibly on the verge of mutiny. Defense Minister Igor Rodionov told parliament in September that the current military budget covers barely a third of the army's needs, leaving most soldiers without salaries for months at a time and some without food, fuel or winter clothing.

"About 4,000 conscripts die every year, excluding combat deaths, because of accidents, hunger, disease and suicide," says Valentina Melnikova, coordinator of the Committee of Soldier's Mothers, an anti-militarist group. "Despite all the talk about reform, and what is written in the constitution, young men basically have no hope. Their only option is to run away, and keep running."

—Fred Weir

Razing the second ghetto

When Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Henry Cisneros resigned on November 21, he said one of his proudest achievements was launching a program to tear down thousands of public housing high-rises nationwide and to replace them with vouchers that the poor could use to find their own housing in the private market.

Good arguments can be made for replacing high-rise housing projects with scattered-site, mixed-income housing. High-rises have tended to concentrate the poorest residents in dense communities with virtually no internal resources. Combined with twisted welfare policies, they have created monuments to despair.

But if the problems are clear, the best solutions may not be so self-evident. Cisneros developed his demolition-and-vouchers policy in close association with Chicago's City Hall. When Vince Lane was forced to resign as chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) last year because of apparent conflicts of interest with his real estate business, HUD took over CHA.

This, however, was no federal power grab. The regional HUD director is Edwin Eisendrath, a former alderman close to Mayor Richard M. Daley who also serves as president of the CHA advisory committee. Eisendrath and Daley worked closely with Cisneros to get a federal law suspended that required all demolished public housing to

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APPALL-O-METER

THE IN THESE TIMES INDEX OF INDECENCIES



By David Futrelle

I fought the law **9.3**

Since California's Corcoran State Prison opened in 1988, some 50 prisoners have been shot by guards while fighting, and of these, seven were killed. Prison officials have warned that unless the state provides money to build six new prisons, they foresee "the creation of conditions where violence and the potential loss of life and property will escalate."

They didn't mention, however, that the "creators" of such conditions might well be the men in blue. A *San Francisco Chronicle* investigation now reveals that prison guards have been staging some of these fights for their own amusement. One former inmate claims to have fought in 11 staged brawls and says that he was rewarded with extra sandwiches when he did well. Officers regularly bet on the outcomes of the fights, and one guard apparently enjoyed playing the sports announcer, offering running commentary on the fights.

Better luck after the revolution, Bobby **7.1**

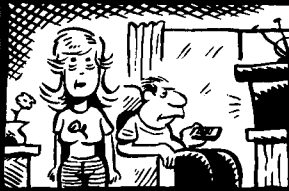
A couple of years back, you may recall, he very much wanted to be a member of it. But now, author and crackpot legal theorist Robert Bork has decided that, hey hey, ho ho, the Supreme Court has got to go. In the midst of an overheated symposium on "The End of Democracy?" in the conservative monthly *First Things*, Bork declares that the robed conspirators on the Court (minus justices Thomas and Scalia) "have decided to rule us without any warrant in law." This "band of outlaws" has, with perverse glee, forced down the throats of the good people of the nation such atrocities as baby-killing, physician-assisted suicide, radical feminism and a "newly faddish approval of homosexual conduct." "It seems safe to say that, as our institutional arrangements now stand, the Court can never be made a legitimate element of a basically democratic polity," Bork sighs. Will Bork be exchanging his judicial robes for militia cammies any time soon? Elsewhere in the issue, the *First Things* editors compare America to Nazi Germany; University of Tulsa professor Russell Hittinger suggests that "prompting [a] constitutional crisis" is the only "responsible" way to fight the Court's "despotic rule"; and former Watergater Charles Colson insists that Christians "in good conscience" need to "slowly, prayerfully, and with great deliberation and serious debate" prepare themselves for "open rebellion" against a no-longer-democratic government.



Das Boot **8.2**

Well, you have to give credit to the Nazis for one thing, at least: They made great boots. At least that seems to be the opinion of one Israeli businessman who has begun selling boots and other items made from "Nazi leather" at his Tel Aviv boutique, the *Chicago Tribune* reports. "It is high quality and doesn't get dirty," a salesclerk told the press. "All the boots by the Nazis in World War II were made of this material."

DRAB, BORING
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YOU
DOWN?



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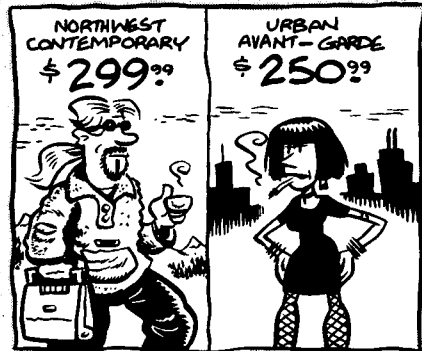


ED STEIN: "MR. LIFESTYLE"

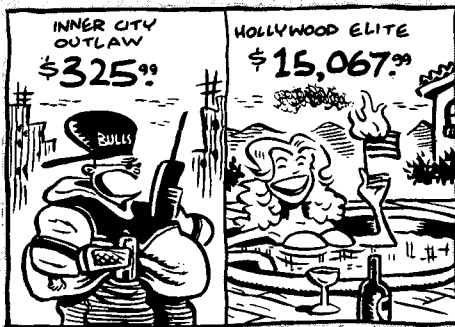
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TERRY LABAN '86

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be replaced unit-for-unit with new low-income housing. The suspension has opened the door for public housing authorities to tear down high-rises.

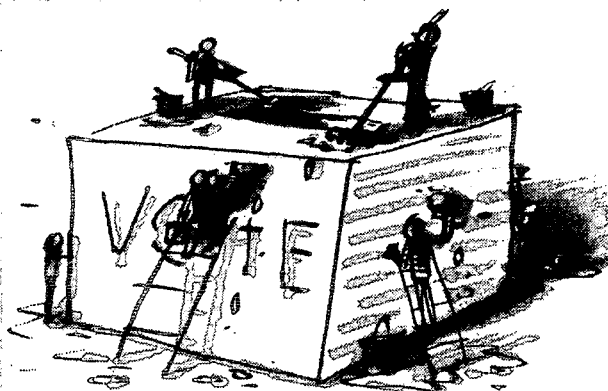
But if the Chicago case is any indication, the proponents of demolition don't exactly have the interests of public housing residents at heart. In an agreement it signed with tenant leaders at Chicago's Cabrini-Green housing project in May 1995, the CHA promised to tear down three high-rises and replace them with new housing in the immediate area. But last spring, without consulting tenants, Daley announced plans to instead tear down eight of Cabrini's 23 high-rises, resulting in a net loss of more than 1,000 of the project's units. In October, tenant leaders filed a federal lawsuit to block the new demolitions.

Artensa Randolph, chair of the city-wide Central Advisory Committee of Chicago's public housing residents, calls the proposed demolitions "economic cleansing Chicago-style." Situated adjacent to Chicago's expanding downtown Loop and just west of the affluent Gold Coast, the land on which Cabrini sits is worth a fortune. The area was an historic African-American community in the '50s, when houses and businesses were cleared to erect these giant high-rises.

Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL), who grew up in the area, charges that Daley "is in the pocket of fat-cat developers." There is some evidence to back up that view. For instance, the largest single budget item in the \$50 million grant that HUD gave the CHA for Cabrini's redevelopment was \$17 million for the acquisition of adjoining property, which is to be turned over free of charge to developers.

The facts of the case appear to favor the tenants, according to Richard Wheelock of the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago, who is representing them in the suit. But the forces in favor of demolition may be too powerful to stymie in court. Even if the judge enjoins the CHA from carrying out immediate demolition, the agency will continue to pressure the tenants to allow the most possible demolition and the fewest possible replacement units in the shortest amount of time.

—Christopher Chandler



Remember the Maine initiative!

A NATIONWIDE POLL CONDUCTED FOR THE CENTER FOR Responsive Politics shows that 68 percent of American voters support reforms contained in the Clean Elections Act, a ballot measure for full public financing for all state races, which was passed in November by Maine voters. According to the poll, 61 percent of Republicans supported the measure. "For years, politicians and pundits alike have told us that, regardless of its merits, public financing like the Maine Clean Elections option will never fly with the American public," says Ellen Miller, the center's director. "Even those who personally believe that this kind of system is the only way to solve the problem refrain from advocating it." For example, Sen. Russell Feingold (D-WI), co-sponsor of the half-hearted McCain-Feingold campaign finance bill, has endorsed a more thorough, Maine-style reform, although he continues to accept the conventional wisdom that the Republicans would block any such reform in Congress. "Washington probably can tinker with the current system and make it a little better," says Miller. "But if we're really serious about overhauling the system to diminish the influence of special interests, we need to look beyond the Beltway for answers."

—Joel Bleifuss

A second opinion for single-payer

THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AN AFFILIATE OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (AMA), HAS passed a resolution endorsing a single-payer national health insurance system. Before the days of managed care, the AMA was one of the staunchest opponents of comprehensive national health insurance. But the Medical Society's resolution may indicate that the national association is beginning to reconsider its opinion. "By endorsing single-payer, the Medical Society of D.C. has shaken up the house of medicine," says Dr. Quentin Young, national coordinator for Physicians for a National Health Program. Meanwhile, the Massachusetts AMA affiliate has commissioned a study to determine the feasibility of a single-payer system. And Dr. Robert Tenery, the former head of the Texas Medical Association, has gone on record saying that a single-payer plan is preferable to managed care—which, in his estimation, is to blame for the advancing disintegration of the American health care system. —J.B.



Mexican church tests the political water

As the Vatican tries to persuade Fidel Castro to allow greater civil and religious freedom in Cuba, Catholic leaders in Mexico have grown bolder in their efforts to influence their nation's politics. With important gubernatorial elections on the horizon next summer, Mexico's leading Catholic churchmen are taking full advantage of recent constitutional reforms easing restrictions on the clergy and are commenting from the pulpit on the ruling PRI's economic policies. Church leaders are calling on the government to scale back neoliberal economic policies instituted during the previous two governments, and to return to more socially oriented programs.

Some critics wonder if the church isn't trying to recoup the political power it had at the turn of the century and again in the period immediately after World War II, when the National Catholic Party worked openly to establish social democratic programs in Mexico. In fact, some religious analysts speculate that the church may be putting on a bit of a theatrical performance in an attempt to win new concessions from the Zedillo administration farther down the road.

The ruling PRI's recent lukewarm effort to broaden the base of electoral participation has allowed the clergy to

hang signs from church bell towers warning politicians to keep their hands out of the public treasury. It also gave an excuse to Archbishop Norberto Rivera Carrera of Mexico City to encourage parishioners to practice civil disobedience if circumstances warrant it. Rivera, soon to finish his first year as archbishop, noted in a recent homily in the metropolitan cathedral that the present government's social policies do not meet "even the most basic needs" of the poorest segment of the Mexican population. The new archbishop also told a leading business group that he feared that "not all of the Christian community has responded to the urgent call to divide up its goods and riches with the poor."

Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo has admonished the Mexican Catholic church. During a state visit to Europe last spring, Zedillo commented to Vatican officials that the church should accept its share of responsibility for Mexico's unequal distribution

of wealth, a reference to the church's extensive holdings and to the high style in which some of its leaders lived in the past.

In early October, an Interior Ministry undersecretary warned Rivera to cease his provocative preaching against the government, or face "suitable" reprisals. Rivera brushed the warning aside and said in another homily delivered in late October that the clergy continues to have an obligation to preach correct moral behavior to politicians.

The church openly announced its new active role last March, when Jeronimo Prigione, the papal nuncio in Mexico, warned that "the Mexican government and Mexican society will have to get used to the church's greater participation in national political life. ... And while it's not the responsibility of the clergy to support a single political party against all others, the church does have a role in examining general policy matters such as social welfare, peace, progress, justice, democracy and liberty. These values are the concern of all citizens, among whom we include our priests."

The church's political advocacy, however, has limits. Prigione downplayed the role of social activists such as Bishop Samuel Ruiz of Chiapas. He described Ruiz as "a negotiator" and said emphatically that official church activities in the area are in the hands of Raúl Vera López, who was appointed co-bishop of Chiapas.

—Alva Senzek

Profiles in Discrimination

In the wake of the crash of TWA Flight 800 last July, Vice President Al Gore headed a commission to review the Federal Aviation Administration's safety and security policies. Most notable among the commission's 20 recommendations, which were adopted by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in October, was the creation of a computer passenger "profiling" system to identify potential terrorists on domestic as well as international flights. The FAA will develop the system in collaboration with Northwest Airlines and plans to have the system in operation by 1997.

Unlucky air travelers whose "profiles" fit that of a terrorist can look forward to more intense questioning and more thorough searches by airport security than other passengers. While FAA officials maintain that the system will not screen passengers based on "race, religion, gender or personal appearance," civil libertarians argue that it will merely institutionalize the ethnic discrimination many passengers already have to endure.

"Profiles are essentially stereotypes," says Greg Nojeim of the ACLU. "At the airport ticket counter, passengers check only their luggage, not their rights to personal security, privacy and equality." In times of heightened fears of terrorism, Arabs have been subjected to excessive scrutiny by airport security. After the Oklahoma City bombing, Abraham Ahmad was traveling to Jordan to visit family. Apparently on account of his ethnicity and travel destination, authorities detained him and questioned him repeatedly over three days. He was grilled about his religious practices, strip-searched and paraded through the airport in handcuffs. During the Gulf War, Mohammad Ghonoudian, an Iranian-born American, was taken off a Miami-to-New York flight just before takeoff and interrogated for three hours.

El Al, the national airline of Israel, has done much to develop passenger profiling, and the airline's officials are some of the technique's most vocal proponents. A recent NBC News segment reported that El Al routinely screens "dark-skinned males." In August, Laura Fadil, a nursing student at Yale University, was set to fly from Newark to Israel

to visit her relatives in Haifa for the first time. At the El Al ticket counter, security personnel inquired about the ethnic origin of her name. When Fadil told them it was an Arab name, she was taken to a room and questioned for over half an hour. She gave El Al officials permission to hand-search her luggage, but they nonetheless concluded that she was "a security risk" and gave her a ticket to fly with another airline the next day.

The FAA declined to say whether place of birth or travel history would be factors in the new profiling system. The Gore Commission says it "will establish an advisory board on civil liberties questions that arise from the development and use of profiling systems." Critics argue that civil liberty concerns will be at most an afterthought. No civil libertarians will be in the room when the real decisions are being made.

—Sam Hussein

SOURCES

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THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

By Peter Hannan



T H E F I R S T S T O N E

Warfare or welfare

By Joel Bleifuss

A constitutional amendment to balance the budget has been tentatively blessed by Clinton, and the 105th Congress may pass it. But even if state legislatures show good sense and refuse to ratify the amendment, both the Republican Congress and President Bill Clinton are committed to striving for a balanced budget by the year 2002.

The notion that the nation desperately needs to balance its accounts has given Republicans in Congress and the "Republicrat" in the White House the perfect pretext to attack an array of government programs from OSHA to the EPA. Critics no longer have to pretend that a given program is a waste of money; they need only click their heels and repeat "the government cannot afford it."

A majority of Americans have caught the balanced budget bug. "Since Perot's 1992 campaign, the balanced budget has become a measure of whether government is being sensible or not," says Robert Borosage of the Campaign for America's Future, an organization founded in July to promote a people-centered national economic agenda. On election night, Stan Greenberg, a Democratic pollster with a populist bent, did a survey for the Campaign. The results, says Borosage, were "wonderful news for progressives," with one exception: widespread support for a balanced budget. According to Greenberg's poll, the public's top four concerns, in descending order of importance, are protecting Medicare and Social Security, balancing the budget, providing comprehensive health care, and investing in education.

Given that reality, the time has come to change tactics: Stop debating the idiocy of a balanced budget, accept it as a fait accompli, and then organize and make elected leaders realize that it is in their best interest to cut the Pentagon's budget. "For progressives," says Borosage, "it makes more sense to force a fight on priorities rather than the balanced

budget itself because there is no traction on that issue."

In previous budget battles, public interest groups were on the defensive, each defending its own turf against cuts. "Progressives have failed big-time in forcing the debate on priorities," says Borosage. "We had a large coalition of mainstream domestic groups, mayors and PTAs that was in favor of investing at home after the Cold War. But after Clinton was elected, his budget numbers became the floor. Then groups started fighting each other for their share of the pie, rather than combining their resources to get the defense budget down."

This election year, Republicans in Congress suffered no political fallout from their decision this summer to fork over \$11 billion more to the defense establishment than the Pentagon and the president had requested. According to the Center

for Defense Information, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank of retired military officers, that \$11 billion could have funded 18 federal programs at their current funding levels for an entire year, and \$1 billion or more would still have been left for deficit reduction. These federal programs—which Congressional Republicans had targeted for elimination or cuts—included Head Start (\$3.4 billion); legal aid (\$278 million); school-to-work opportunities (\$190 million); vocational and adult education (\$1.2 billion); the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (\$275 million); the National Endowment for the Arts (\$131 million); the National Endowment for the Humanities (\$129 million); summer youth employment and training (\$635 million); and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (\$46 million).

To meet their balanced budget goals, Congress and the president have three options in the coming year: raise taxes, tamper with entitlements, or again make cuts in discretionary spending (that is, money not committed to entitlements such as Social Security and Medicare, or to interest on the national debt).

So far the Pentagon budget is the only sector of discretionary spending that has not gone under the knife, even though it is rife with waste. Seven years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States continues to fund its military at 90 percent of Cold War levels. In real terms, military spending hasn't declined much from average peacetime Cold War levels. In the 1997 budget, the Pentagon is allocated about 53 percent of the federal government's discretionary spending, or \$265 billion dollars, and the rest of the government is allocated the other 47 percent, or \$235 billion.

The 1997 Pentagon budget contains about \$20 billion for Cold War leftovers, including weapons systems for which there is no longer any need. According to the Center

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for Defense Information, canceling these costly programs and downsizing the nation's active-duty military forces would allow the United States to reduce its military spending from \$265 to \$200 billion.

In 1997, for example, the Pentagon will receive nearly \$9 billion for six new aircraft programs. Over the life of these programs, the armed forces will purchase some 6,000 planes and helicopters at an estimated total cost of \$400 billion. The *Defense Monitor*, the newsletter of the Center for Defense Information, puts it this way: "By pouring money into new military aircraft, we are wasting billions of dollars in an arms race with ourselves." One of these planes, the Joint Strike Fighter—which the Pentagon says will cost \$90 billion for a fleet of 3,000—is being built to suit the needs of the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. Its special features include radar evasion and both vertical and horizontal take-off capabilities. According to the Center for Defense Information, these specialized features make the Joint Strike Fighter "a prime candidate for design and cost problems."

"I do not believe in conspiracies, but I do believe that too many national security officials deliberately cultivate fear of foreign threats in order to justify their role," writes Retired Vice Admiral John Shanahan, the director of the Center for

Defense Information. "Without enemies, how could we justify spending more than \$250 billion every year on a worldwide military empire?"

"When I was on active duty, I ended up going through three wars: World War II, Korea and Vietnam," Shanahan says. "Now the conditions have changed, and military planners should be flexible enough to adjust their buying habits and their force structures." Planning in the Pentagon used to be "threat-based," Shanahan explains, meaning that U.S. military strength was geared to meet the threats of real, known adversaries. But as Cold War strategic planning has become outmoded, the Pentagon has focused on hypothetical enemies instead, justifying its budgets in terms of "capability-based" planning. "Capability to do what?" Shanahan asks. "The Pentagon will tell you that the United States should have the capability to dominate the battle area, to go in with such horrendous force that no one can withstand us. And what that becomes is a blank check for the Pentagon to buy anything they need to dominate the battle area even though there are no threats."

Caleb Rossiter, director of Demilitarization for Democracy, a Washington, D.C.-based peace organization, has little

faith that rational voices will ever be heard. "Nothing seems to diminish the ability of defense contractors to get the Pentagon budget increased every year," he says. "The argument that this is a safer world isn't working. We need to quit having strategic debates and start explaining that this is a corporate rip-off. That is the language we have to start using to explain to the consumer why the military budgets are so high."

Critics of the bloated defense budget must go up against a high-powered public relations apparatus that specializes in rationalizing the irrational. This phalanx of flacks is financed by a military-industrial complex that has no plans to let go of the quarter of a trillion dollars it gets from taxpayers each year. For example, between 1986 and 1988, when Pentagon spending was at its peak, defense contractors paid former Sen. John Tower (R-TX) more than a million dollars to convince his former colleagues to keep the money flowing. Today, former Rep. Don Fuqua (D-FL) is lobbying his one-time colleagues on behalf of the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), which represents about 50 military contractors. According to the Demilitarization for Democracy, Fuqua helped AIA to "lobby successfully for government subsidies that have cost the taxpayer roughly

\$150 million each year since 1992."

And money can buy more than lobbyists. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, PACs representing the defense and aerospace industries contributed \$9.1 million to candidates for federal office in this year's election cycle—\$6.3 million to Republicans and \$2.8 million to Democrats.

While the end of the Cold War has not significantly altered military spending, funding for organizations working on peace and national security issues has dropped sharply. "Foundations aren't funding efforts to reduce military spending," says Martin Calhoun, a budget analyst at the Center for Defense Information. "The Military Spending Working Group, a unified front of arms control organizations, tried to get major foundations to back this unified effort to reduce military spending, and not one foundation would do this."

John Pike of the Federation of American Scientists was one of the founders of the Military Spending Working Group, which has languished without a paid staff due to lack of funds. "The amount of money the philanthropic community is giving to the peace issue is roughly \$10 million, while 10 years ago it was about \$100 million," he says. "To have a significant impact on military spending, you are going to have to spend millions of dollars a year, which is a fraction of the amount of money that foundations are now investing in peace and security. Right now, the advertising budget on a single weapons system equals the entire annual budget for a whole organization."

In the absence of significant public pressure, Congress will likely vote to protect defense spending and slash social programs further. In 1997, the Defense Department will undergo a congressionally mandated quadrennial review. Calhoun, however, is not confident that the review will lead to budgetary reforms. "I fear the military will assume that they will have X amount of money to spend and then cost out what they can afford, when they should be doing it the other way around—determining their needs and then costing out the forces to meet those needs," he says.

Pike is equally pessimistic. "The squeaky wheel gets the grease, and right now it is the military-industrial complex that is squeaking," he says. "And since the various constituencies that are adversely affected by this have been unable to hang together, they are hanging separately."

As the noose gets ready to tighten around social programs in 1997, is anybody pressuring members of Congress to take a stand?

Deborah Walden is director of policy and programs at Women's Action for New Directions (WAND), a coalition of 120 national women's organizations representing 6 million women nationwide. "Based on what we have heard from members of Congress, it is going to take a lot of people in their districts or in their states saying that the Pentagon needs to be cut before Congress will take it up," says Walden, who is in touch with members of the Progressive Caucus in Congress. "Defense is one of these issues that the

more people know about how much is being spent on it in relation to other areas, the more likely they are to say yes, it can be cut."

In a survey last July, the Program on International Policy and Attitudes at the University of Maryland asked people to allocate the discretionary part of the budget as they deemed fit. After being informed about the relative sizes of the budgets for social programs and the military, 80 percent of respondents were in favor of dramatically cutting back Pentagon spending. "As Americans get more information about the actual level of defense spending," the study concluded, "the majority shifts from wanting modest cuts to wanting deep cuts."

WAND has been trying to educate women about the fact that military spending accounts for more than half of the government's discretionary budget, while programs for women and children have been the targets of most of the cuts. The organization is preparing a package of fact sheets that will be sent across the country to 10,000 women leaders. The motto of these women: "Let us slice the pie!"

Ice cream baron Ben Cohen is also trying to sell Americans on the idea that the Pentagon needs to be put on a strict diet. On June 23, Cohen took out a full-page ad in the *New York Times* to announce the formation of Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities. He describes the new organization as "a group of business people working to increase spending for social programs by redirecting the military budget." So far the group has attracted to its steering committee business leaders such as Richard Foos of Rhino Records and Alan Hassenfeld, CEO of Hasbro Inc., the maker of GI Joe.

Cohen's group plans to test-market the case for cutting the Pentagon budget in a yet-to-be-disclosed metropolitan area. "If the public understood what was really going on, they would be looking to cut the military budget tremendously," says Cohen. "We are going to start to do some media advertising, host special events and work with local grass-roots groups." The group's goal is to make all Americans familiar with information contained on two charts: One, a bar graph, compares the military expenditures of the United States, our allies and our potential adversaries. The other, a pie chart, shows how the U.S. discretionary budget is divvied up. "The target audience for organizing has gone way beyond the usual peace and conversion suspects," explains Cohen. "We are looking for much more support nationwide."

Walden is confident that the women WAND reaches will support big cuts in the Pentagon. "During the Cold War, the threat of nuclear annihilation gave us something to rally around," Walden says. "Now as we hear more about balancing the budget, it is going to take more and more people demanding that military spending be put on the table. We have to face the facts of a new age. The Cold War is over, and we should use some of those funds for human and environmental needs." ◀

SPORTS

Buy the bums out

W

hen fans of the New York Yankees show up at the team's opening game next April, the voice of public address announcer Bob Sheppard will no doubt say the words they've waited to hear: "And now, your World Champion New York Yankees!"

The lure of shared glory is the engine that drives the pro sports machine. When millions of people packed the streets of Manhattan after the Yankees' World Series victory, there was much talk of "civic pride," of how everyone in the city could and should share in the team's victory.

But the Yankees are not owned by the fans. They are owned by one man, George Steinbrenner—who has threatened to take the team out of the city if he doesn't get a multimillion-dollar stadium at public expense.

In city after city, the public is being asked to cough up hundreds of millions of

dollars for new stadiums and arenas to keep their sports teams in town (see "The great stadium swindle," August 19). And inevitably, in each of these cities, the question is raised: Why not just buy the team outright, guaranteeing that it will stay put while saving taxpayer money?

As stadium blackmail has escalated to unprecedented levels, the idea of public ownership has gathered more and more adherents. "It's cheaper to buy the franchise than to bribe it to stay here," Philip Howard, a New York attorney who has proposed that the city seize the Yankees, told the *New York Observer* last April. "Mayor Giuliani is absolutely right to try as hard as he can to retain the Yankees, an integral part of the emotional fabric of the city. But maybe there's a more sensible way of doing it than spending a billion dollars on a new stadium."

"It's a logical thing to happen," agrees Andrew Zimbalist, a professor of economics at Smith College and author of *Baseball and Billions*, a close look at the finances of

America's pastime. "Sports teams are just perfect vehicles for public ownership for all sorts of reasons—the most important being the large investment the public is expected to make in these teams, but also because it's really a public good, and it has a cultural dominance that's unlike anything else in our society."

In the Yankees case, Howard has suggested the city use its power of eminent domain to seize control of the team, just as it would condemn land for a new highway, paying the owner fair market value. Last spring Richard Brodsky, a New York State Assembly member, introduced the Sports Fan Protection Act, which would authorize the state to seize the Yankees by eminent domain if Steinbrenner threatened to take the team to New Jersey.

The legal precedents for public seizure of a club are there, if murky: Oakland attempted to seize the Raiders by eminent domain when the football team announced it would flee to Los Angeles in 1980, and the city of Baltimore took similar action four years later in an attempt to stop the Colts from leaving town. The Colts fled under cover of darkness (literally, with moving vans pulling out for Indiana in the middle of the night) before Baltimore was legally able to stake its claim. The city of Oakland did get its day in court, but its case was rejected on narrow grounds: Though the California Supreme Court ruled that Oakland had the right to seize the team by eminent domain, a lower court subsequently found that in this case, Oakland should not be allowed to seize the team since the seizure would "impermissibly burden interstate commerce." Howard and others have used the California precedent to argue for new attempts to seize teams. They point out that since other courts have allowed the eminent domain seizure of land for

Public ownership of teams is an idea whose time has come—but the sports barons will fight it tooth and nail.

By Joanna Cagan
and Neil deMause



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a sports stadium as an acceptable “public good,” the same argument can be made for a team.

Nor have all attempts to establish municipally owned pro sports teams been failures. Two minor-league baseball teams, the Columbus Clippers and Toledo Mud Hens, have for decades been successfully run by non-profit corporations set up by their respective counties. A short-lived attempt by Zimbalist, player agent Richard Moss and two former members of Congress to organize a competing professional baseball league, the United Baseball League, envisioned teams partially owned by the players, partially by the city, and partially by private owners. (The league, which was launched in 1994 in hopes of beginning play in 1997, unravelled when a proposed TV contract fell through, and it officially suspended operations last April.)

There is, however, one very large catch: Even if a city could get hold of a franchise, the leagues themselves may assert their power to deny franchises to “undesirable” owners. (The NFL did not return phone calls for this story; Major League Baseball spokespersons would only say that

the league has no written policy prohibiting public ownership.) Under this system, even if an owner chose to give his or her team to a city at no public cost, the league could still scuttle the transaction. This actually happened in San Diego in the summer of 1989, when Joan Kroc, then the owner of the Padres baseball team, approached San Diego Mayor Maureen O'Connor with a startling proposal.

Kroc, who had inherited the Padres from her late husband, McDonald's founder Ray Kroc, wanted to give the team outright to the city as a gift; furthermore, she was prepared to endow it with a \$100 million trust fund to pay for the team's operation. O'Connor was thrilled by the offer, hoping to set up a non-profit corporation to operate the team. But the response from Major League Baseball—and the owners' committee that must approve all such deals—was swift and severe. The screening committee rejected the proposal out of hand. The *San Diego Union* reported that “people privy to the short-lived discussions say a couple of Kroc's fellow owners nearly popped blood vessels when she pitched her plan.”

Written policy or no, the baseball barons have made it clear that no municipal ownership of a franchise will take place on their watch. This applies even to cities that wish to buy shares in a club: When the city of Pittsburgh wanted to invest \$15 million in the Pirates baseball team in 1985, Major League Baseball said no. The city was forced to donate the money as a gift without receiving any equity in the team in return. Now, 11 years later, Pittsburgh is one of the cities being blackmailed by a new owner, who is threatening to move the Pirates to Sacramento or Northern Virginia if the city doesn't build a new stadium for the team. The city of Montreal and province of Quebec likewise received nothing in return for the \$33 million they gave the Expos in 1990, and are now facing threats of a move.

If cities are locked out of the ownership structure, some suggest, what about giving the fans themselves a stake through the sale of stock in the franchise? This is the model used by everyone's favorite public ownership example, the Green Bay Packers. Owned since 1922 by shareholders holding non-tradable stock, run by a non-profit board of directors, and still residing peacefully in a tiny market in the United States, Green Bay has certainly won its place in the hearts and minds of fans weary of shelling out big bucks for teams that may later on a whim (or a fat-cat deal) abandon a town that's been their home for decades.

Another current example of a "publicly owned" major-league sports franchise is the Boston Celtics basketball team, which issued stock equal to about 40 percent of the team in 1986 and sold it to fans. The owners reaped a windfall profit of \$48 million without relinquishing control over the club's operations. On November 13 of this year, the Florida Panthers hockey club likewise went public, with owner Wayne Huizenga retaining a controlling interest in the team.

These forms of public "ownership" leave owners free to continue treating the teams as their private property. Even so, don't expect sports leagues to permit many other franchises to follow the model of the Celtics and the Packers. When a local newspaper reporter got a positive response from Steinbrenner to the idea of publicly selling stock in the Yankees, it caused a brief flurry of interest—until the next day, when the newspapers reported that Major League Baseball was unalterably opposed to the idea.

"Once it goes public, you could have anybody buying into those shares," baseball spokesperson Pat Courtney told the *Daily News*. "You could have casinos buying shares. You have no control over who is buying it. You could run into tremendous conflicts of interest." At other times, the leagues have warned of governmental mismanagement, or of public ownership simply not being in "the best interests in the game." "Whenever a commissioner speaks of 'the interests of the game,' follow the money," quips Washington State University professor Rodney Fort, co-author of the definitive sports economics book, *Pay Dirt*.

"The owners don't want to have to open the books," says Zimbalist. "It's not the way they've ever conducted

their business." The cooked books in professional sports franchises are legendary. Observers have pointed to such "legal" bookkeeping fictions as media outlets under a team owner's corporate umbrella underpaying for broadcast rights, making the team's revenues look lower than they are. Steinbrenner reportedly once paid himself a \$25 million consulting fee for time spent negotiating a cable deal for the Yankees during the '80s—at a time when he was refusing to pay rent on Yankee Stadium to the city of New York.

Bookkeeping rackets aside, the public's influence on publicly held teams like the Celtics and the Packers is about as great as the clout your next-door neighbor wields on the bosses at Microsoft or IBM by holding one share of their stock. While the Packers' unique ownership structure may prevent the team from stealing away to the likes of St. Petersburg, it does not represent a true rearranging of fiscal priorities or a restructuring of the front office. "It's run the same way all other teams are run," Zimbalist says. "They have a board of directors that is filled not with representatives of the common person, but with people like Bud Selig, the acting commissioner of baseball, other luminaries from the business community, and Sen. [Herbert] Kohl from Wisconsin."

The Celtics are leagues away from true public ownership as well. "On the one hand, you can say [the Celtics are] the exception," adds Fort. "On the other hand, you can say, so what if they're publicly traded? Nothing is really different about the Celtics than any other team. Because, after all, if you issue lots of stock in little bitty bunches, and you maintain the majority of the stock, then who cares?"

Outright municipal ownership is probably the only real way to make sports teams answerable to their fans—and today's crop of owners is not about to let that happen. The principal obstacle is the simple fear of losing what is currently a very, very lucrative situation for team owners. "Think about the way owners deal with cities now: an artificial maintenance of scarcity of teams," Fort says. "You can't lose in that situation: 'Give me what I want, or I'll split.' Well now, if the city decided to keep a marginally valuable franchise hanging around, to keep a minority of potential voters happy, then the value of your league goes down. They'll never do it in 10,000 years."

Joanna Cagan and Neil deMause are writing a book on sports and corporate welfare for Common Courage Press.

In These Times
extends its heartfelt sympathy
to the family and friends of
Larry Downing,
Vice President of the Midwest Territories,
International Association of Machinists
and Aerospace Workers.
Mr. Downing died in a plane crash in Quincy, Ill.,
on Nov. 19, 1996.

BLACK AMERICA

Holding pattern

Black congressional incumbents survived redistricting, but there are strict limits on what they can hope to accomplish.

By Salim Muwakkil

Last month's elections offered progressives meager political solace. After hopeful speculation about how the Democrats might recapture one or even both houses of Congress—and what their agenda would be if they did so—the results simply reaffirmed the status quo. For black elected officials, however, reaffirming the status quo was about the best result that could be hoped for.

Although the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) shrank by one member, the group passed a crucial test in the November 5 elections. Despite widespread predictions to the contrary, five black incumbents won in districts newly redrawn to eliminate black-majority electorates. "Many of these black politicians are just as resilient, just as savvy as the best of the white politicians," says David Bositis, a senior political analyst of the Joint Center for Political

and Economic Studies in Washington, D.C. "Many people don't realize just how competent blacks have become at playing these political power games."

The 105th Congress will include one black Democratic senator and 36 black Democratic representatives (one fewer than in the previous session). Of the two incumbent black Republican representatives, only J.C. Watts of Oklahoma—who thus far has refused to join the CBC—will return. Gary Franks of Connecticut, who had served a district that is 88 percent white, was defeated by white Democratic challenger James Maloney.

Four new members joined the CBC fold: Harold Ford Jr. (D-TN) will replace his retiring father; Danny Davis (D-IL), an eloquent Chicago progressive, will replace retiring Rep. Cardiss Collins; Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick (D-MI) will replace Rep. Barbara Rose Collins, whom she defeated in the primary; and Julia Carson (D-IN) will be the first black woman to represent Indiana.

Franks' defeat meant that the CBC lost its only Republican member, but the group's ideological orientation is not expected to change. The CBC has historically supported social spending and voted against most of the GOP leadership's favored programs. Last year, for example, the group combined forces with the House Progressive Caucus to craft an alternative balanced budget plan that would minimize cuts in social programs by collecting an average of \$85 billion more in corporate income taxes and spending \$70 billion less on the military each year between 1996 and 2002.

Advocates of the 1965 Voting Rights Act have long argued that blacks historically had little chance of being elected in districts with white electorates. For example, by 1980, a full 15 years after black Americans were fully enfranchised by the Act, the House of Representatives contained only 16 black members. This was about 4 percent of the total, while African-Americans made up 12 percent of the U.S. population. In 1982, the Voting Rights Act was modified to require states to draw congressional districts that enhanced the representation of blacks and other minorities. This change facilitated the election of several black candidates from Southern states that had large African-American populations but had had no black representation since Reconstruction. A record 40 blacks were elected in 1994 to serve in the 104th Congress: one, Carol Moseley Braun, in the Senate, and 39 in the House.

This year's loss of two seats ends a 12-year streak of consistent gains for black politicians. However, the drop in numbers is considerably less than many expected. The 1993 Supreme Court ruling in *Shaw vs. Reno*, which questioned the constitutionality of racial redistricting, undermined the 1982 interpretation of the Voting Rights Act and sparked fears that black representation would be dramatically

reduced. In rulings on other congressional districts redrawn to ensure black majorities, including the June 1995 *Miller vs. Johnson* and the June 1996 *Bush vs. Vera*, the high court simply firmed up *Shaw*. When the dust settled, the districts of black Reps. Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), Sanford Bishop (D-GA), Cleo Fields (D-LA), Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), Corrine Brown (D-FL) and Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), were redrawn to be minority black. (Melvin Watt's North Carolina district was ruled invalid but has not yet been redrawn.)

McKinney's race for Georgia's newly-created 4th district embodied the issues stirred up in the redistricting controversy. McKinney's old 11th district had a 63 percent black majority; her new 4th district has a 33 percent black minority. Not surprisingly, race became an issue in McKinney's re-

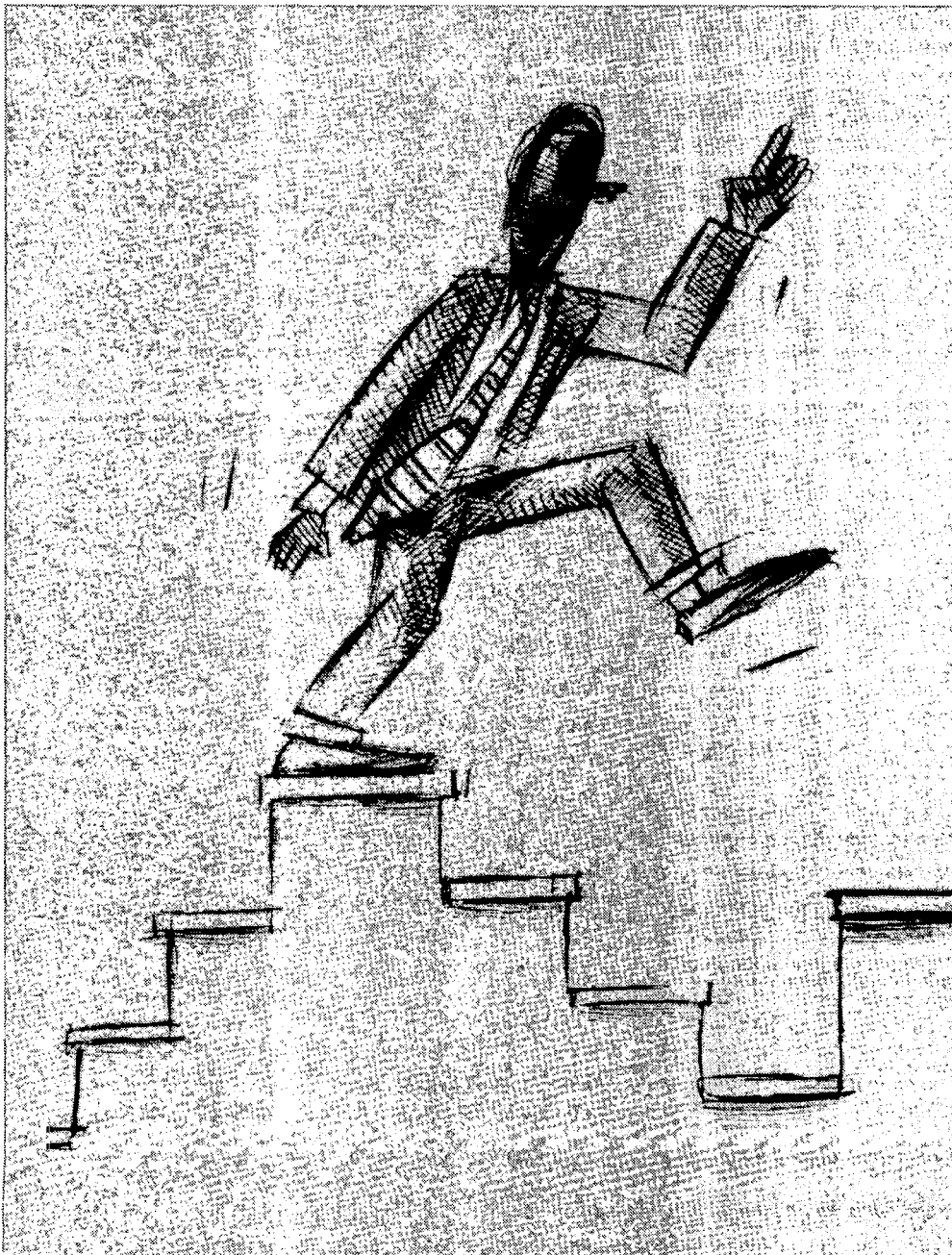
election bid. Her challenger, white Republican John Mitnick, accused her, among other things, of cozying up to Louis Farrakhan. Ironically, say some analysts, Mitnick's attempt to insert Farrakhan into the race may have backfired. The Farrakhan controversy focused attention on Mitnick's Jewish identity in a region noted for its anti-Semitism.

McKinney walloped Mitnick by a 20-point margin. She polled 90 percent of the black vote and 31 percent of the white vote in her new district, according to a recently completed study by Allan J. Lichman, a professor of history at American University and an expert witness in 60 voting rights cases. According to Lichman, voting patterns in the newly-drawn Georgia districts were still racially polarized; in both the McKinney and Bishop races, the black candi-

dates won almost unanimous support from black voters but only about a third of the white vote. Despite the incumbents' victories in redrawn districts, Lichman says, "drawing any conclusions about these results is vastly premature. Those people who are so quick now to generalize about black opportunities didn't have a word to say when blacks were losing white districts all these years."

McKinney also cautioned analysts about interpreting her success as a vindication of *Shaw* and other rulings on redistricting. "To the pundits who will try to draw conclusions from our victory, and misuse it as a justification to dismantle all minority districts, I say: 'Think again,' " she said in her victory speech. "I am here today specifically because the people of the old 11th District lifted me on their shoulders. Without the opportunity to represent them and develop a track record, a candidate such as myself might never have had the resources and name recognition necessary to win in this district."

McKinney's voting record is among the most liberal in the CBC and considered out of touch with her Deep South constituency. Nonetheless, says her pollster Ron L. Lester, "by virtue of being the incum-



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Surge in black male vote

Perhaps more remarkable—and more encouraging—than the strong showing of black incumbents last month was the significant jump in the number of black male voters. According to preliminary figures, 1.7 million more black men turned out this year than in 1992. “The increase in black male voters is really the big story of this election,” says David Bositis of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

In his report, *Blacks and the 1996 Elections: A Preliminary Analysis*, published in mid-November, Bositis notes that overall voter turnout was down—from 102 million in 1992 to 95.8 million in 1996—but black voter turnout increased. In 1996, black voters cast 10 percent of all ballots, or approximately 9.6 million votes, up from 8 percent of all ballots, or 8.16 million votes, in 1992. Black men cast 4.7 million votes, accounting for 5 percent of those who came to the polls, up from 3 million votes, or less than 3 percent of the total, in 1992. At the same time, the turnout of black women fell by about 300,000. About 84 percent of the black electorate voted for Clinton. In fact, the black contribution to the president’s vote increased from 15.4 percent in 1992 to 17.1 percent in 1996.

Spokespeople for the Nation of Islam and the National African American Leadership Summit were quick to attribute the voting increase to the Million Man March they organized in October 1995. Although Bositis is reluctant to draw such conclusions until all the data are in, he says they may have a point. “If the voting rate of black women had gone up, one could say this increase was an overall trend,” he says. —S.M.

bent, she was able to connect with voters on issues like education, support for Medicare, and an increased minimum wage.” What’s more, McKinney was hardly an ordinary incumbent. She had national name recognition and a vivacious personality. Incumbency also conferred financial benefits. McKinney attracted the support of several white progressive groups, including the Sierra Club, Emily’s List and the National Organization for Women (NOW), which helped her raise more than five times as much money as her opponent.

It’s considerably less remarkable that Sanford Bishop won in a new Georgia district that has a 35 percent black minority. “Bishop is a Blue Dog Democrat, so he’s a lot more ideologically in tune with his white constituents than McKinney,” Bositis explains. In addition to the two black Georgians, Reps. Johnson, Jackson-Lee and Brown also emerged victorious in newly redrawn districts. The Indiana district that elected Julia Carson is nearly 70 percent white. Fields chose to retire rather than struggle for re-election in his redesigned district.

Despite black incumbents’ good showing in 1996, many analysts of black politics argue that this holding action is just a temporary plateau in what will emerge as a long-term decline of black political power. “The trend is inexorably moving toward less black representation,” says Clarence Lusane. “We’re still in a backlash from ‘liberal’ big government. And generally that translates as support for policies that generally are against the interests of African-Americans.” Lusane, the author of *No Easy Victories: A History of Blacks in Office* and other books on black politics, is pessimistic about the CBC’s prospects in the near future. “I’m afraid that the CBC will have relatively little influence on the policy direction of Clinton’s second term. They have little to offer a lame-duck president, unless, of course, he decides to make racial reconciliation his legacy.”

Other observers draw parallels between the current political mood and that of a century ago, when political power was radically withdrawn from blacks. The growing

racial tension erupting today, they warn, echoes the racial resentments sounded during the backlash against Reconstruction.

Nonetheless, the CBC victories are also cause for some optimism. White voters are marginally more willing to elect black candidates than in the past, and that’s progress. Coupled with the increased electoral participation of black male voters and more aggressive voter registration campaigns, it seems clear that any attempt to reverse black political gains will be met with resistance.

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F O R E I G N P O L I C Y

Payback

A

*Countries
that trade
with Cuba
are furious
about the
Helms-Burton
Act. And
they're
getting even.*

By Wayne S. Smith

bill was recently introduced in the Canadian Parliament that gives the three million Canadian descendants of colonial Loyalists—who fled to Canada after the American Revolution—the right to bring suit in Canadian courts against Americans who are “trafficking” in the properties that once belonged to their families and for which they were not properly compensated. The bill, submitted by parliament members John Godfrey and Peter Milikin, is tongue in cheek, but as Milikin points out, it is no more ridiculous than the Helms-Burton Act, which Bill Clinton signed into law on March 22.

That legislation, named for its sponsors Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Rep. Dan Burton (R-IN), seeks to punish foreign companies that “traffic” in American factories or other property in Cuba nationalized by the Cuban government in the

’60s. Under Helms-Burton, “trafficking” is defined so broadly that it could include any kind of commercial relationship with Cuba. The law gives American citizens—including naturalized Cubans—the right to bring suit in U.S. courts against the foreign companies that use that confiscated property. The law also requires the State Department to deny visas to executives of these companies and their families. Another provision prohibits Cuban participation in international financial organizations and threatens sanctions against countries that provide any form of “economic assistance” to Cuba, including favorable terms of trade.

Initially, Clinton opposed Helms-Burton, even suggesting he would veto it. But in January he abruptly reversed himself and signed the bill into law in retaliation for Cuba’s downing of two light aircraft flown by the Cuban-American exile group Brothers to the Rescue. In July, Clinton suspended the law’s stiffest measures for six months, as the law gives him the authority to do. He can continue to postpone enforcing those provisions every six months indefinitely.

Helms-Burton has provoked a flurry of denunciations and formal protests. It has enraged Washington’s closest allies, jeopardizing the country’s commercial relations with Canada, Europe and Mexico. Moreover, Helms-Burton violates international law and the rules of fair trade as laid out in GATT and NAFTA—trade accords that the United States not only signed but championed. When it suits its fancy, Washington is willing to use trade policy as an arm of its foreign policy. But U.S. control of the world economy is declining, making it harder and harder for the United States to bully its allies into foregoing business opportunities in countries such as Libya, Iran and Cuba.

The United States began its descent down this perilous road with the passage of the Cuban Democracy Act (CDA) in November 1992. That law tightened the U.S. embargo by reinstating the ban on trade between Cuba and subsidiaries of American companies (a prohibition ended in the United States and the rest of the Western Hemisphere by a vote in the Organization of American States in 1975). Faced with severe penalties to their parent companies, these subsidiaries halted their trade with Cuba—about \$600 million annually, some 90 percent of which was commerce in food and medicine. The restriction imposed new hardships on the Cuban people but had little impact on the overall Cuban economy. It did, however, serve to rile governments in Canada, Europe and Latin America, which regarded the law as an unacceptable encroachment on their sovereignty.

Their anger paved the way for the passage—by a vote of 88 to 4—of the first U.N. General Assembly resolution condemning the U.S. embargo. (This year, the vote was 138 to 3. Even the two countries that voted with the United States,



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Israel and Uzbekistan, trade with Cuba.)

More than principle is at stake. Before the collapse of Cuba's preferential trading relationship with the Soviet Union in 1989, the trade provisions in Helms-Burton would have had no real impact, since there was virtually no private foreign investment in Cuba. Since 1989, however, the Cuban government has assiduously courted foreign capital. Private capital has flooded into the Cuban market, with Canadian and Mexican companies leading the way. The Canadian mining company Sherritt International (which has invested in nickel mining and oil exploration) and the Mexican telecommunications company Grupo Doms (which purchased 49 percent of Cuba's telephone system) are the biggest investors; not surprisingly, their CEOs were the first to be barred entry into the United States. In 1992, there were only 50 joint ventures between foreign firms and state enterprises in Cuba. Today, there are more than 240, with about 150 more under negotiation. Companies have committed nearly \$5 billion (though probably no more than \$1.5 billion has made its way to the island so far).

Helms-Burton has at least temporarily chilled foreign investment in Cuba. Most foreign companies, especially banks, have adopted a wait-and-see approach. Yet the law is unlikely to stand in American courts, and once corporate lawyers have had time to study the legislation, they will probably advise their clients to ignore it.

Hesitant investors no doubt were encouraged by the recent actions of Sherritt. In defiance of Helms-Burton, the

company held a board meeting in Cuba in September and subsequently announced that it would greatly step up its investment in Cuba. Uncertain that banks would give the additional \$300 million that the company wanted to pump into Cuba, Sherritt announced the sale of a convertible debenture issue to raise the money. Despite warnings from the United States (or perhaps because of them), the issue was greatly oversubscribed within two days. As of mid-November, the company had almost \$1 billion in its coffers to invest in Cuba. Sherritt is not the only Canadian company that is moving full speed ahead. Canadian trade with Cuba has actually increased since the passage of Helms-Burton.

The Mexican and Canadian governments are also taking legal recourse against the legislation. They have filed complaints with the grievance board set up under NAFTA. They charge that Helms-Burton is a violation of the trade agreement, which was meant to open the borders of all three countries to freer trade.

Both countries have also introduced retaliatory legislation that makes it illegal for Mexican and Canadian citizens to comply with Helms-Burton and contains "claw-back" provisions that allow them to countersue American companies and citizens in their own court systems. The Mexican legislation has already been enacted into law. The Canadian bill sailed through the lower house of Parliament, and will likely pass in the Senate.

On October 4, the European Union (EU) filed an official request for the Dispute Settlement Body of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to rule on whether Helms-Burton con-

forms to the WTO's rules of conduct, which, among other things, prohibit secondary boycotts. Canada has joined the EU's request as an interested third party. The EU has also unanimously called for retaliatory legislation, though each national parliament will have to enact its own measures. The organization has already begun to compile a "watch list" of U.S. companies that might sue Europeans. As one European businessman put it, "we know who they are, and if they ever try to take us to court, we'll be ready immediately to return the favor."

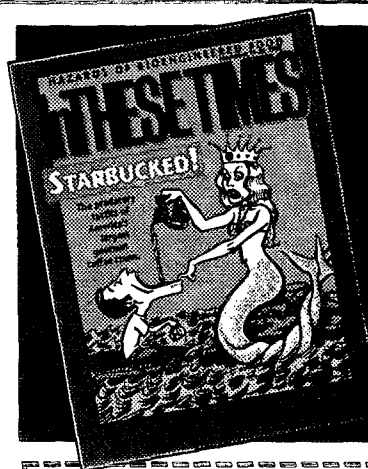
Many countries are considering multilateral claw-back agreements. Under such agreements, if an American entity being countersued by, say, a Canadian company didn't have assets in Canada, the Canadian company could go after the American entity's assets in a third country.

The Organization of American States has joined in the chorus. At its General Assembly, held this June in Panama, the organization voted unanimously to reject the Helms-Burton Act and called on the Inter-American Juridical Committee (IAJC)—its judicial body—to rule whether the legislation conforms to international law. Rarely does the OAS condemn the United States, and even more rarely are those condemnations by unanimous vote. But as a Venezuelan diplomat commented privately, "Helms-Burton is so blatantly illegal and extraterritorial that one has no choice but to tell the Americans that it is unacceptable and that there will be serious consequences if it is implemented."

In a unanimous opinion handed down on August 23, the IAJC ruled that the Helms-Burton Act violated international law on at least eight counts. The Committee pointed out that the domestic courts of a claimant state are not the appropriate forum for the resolution of state-to-state claims, that the claimant state does not have the right to espouse the claims of those who were not its nationals at the time they lost their property, and that the claimant state does not have the right to impose compensation greater than the value of the property in question, plus interest.

The IAJC's unequivocal ruling, though not binding, is a portent of what to expect from the WTO in the near future. If the WTO panel decides that Helms-Burton violates the rules of international trade, it will ask the United States to amend or repeal the offending legislation. The United States may appeal the ruling, but the decision is unlikely to be overturned. The Clinton administration will then face a dilemma: It can either accept the judgment and begin the process of repealing Helms-Burton, or it can ignore it and seriously weaken the WTO and possibly spark a trade war with Europe. Such an outcome probably doesn't concern Jesse Helms, who is suspicious of faceless global bureaucrats and might relish a good fight with Europe. It should, however, worry President Clinton.

Wayne S. Smith is a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy in Washington, D.C., and a visiting professor of Latin American Studies at Johns Hopkins University. From 1979 to 1982, he was chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana.



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L A B O R

Entering the fray

***The AFL-CIO's
\$35 million
campaign put
labor on the
political map,
but did it get
working people
politically
involved?***

By Peter Donohue

This past May, the AFL-CIO began the process of educating voters about the "working family issues" at stake in the congressional race in California's 10th District. The contest between incumbent Republican Bill Baker and Democrat Ellen Tauscher was targeted by the federation as part of its Labor '96 campaign to wrest control of Congress from the Republicans and to make unions a political force to be reckoned with.

Unionists affiliated with the AFL-CIO—in coordination with local labor groups—made a concerted effort to reach out to fellow workers in the East Bay suburban district by walking door to door in the precinct, staffing phone banks, and participating in other get-out-the-vote programs. One of the campaign's primary challenges was to deflect attention from the Republicans' key

wedge issues. Rather than engaging these issues directly, Labor '96 organizers urged workers to reflect on more important priorities. Gun control, for example, proved to be a major sticking point for some union members. "We had to get people to think about what was more important—guns or pension rights, portable health care and education," says Van Alan Sheets, a Labor '96 coordinator, "not tell them how to vote."

The labor movement's efforts paid off. In Labor Day polls, Tauscher had trailed Baker by 20 percent. But by three weeks before election day, she had narrowed the gap to two percentage points. Union members came out en masse to vote, while overall voter turnout dropped in the district. The final tally: Tauscher 49 percent; Baker 46.8 percent.

In previous elections, the AFL-CIO limited its activities to producing educational materials, using member dues for "soft money" donations to the Democratic Party, and making national contributions to candidates through Committees on Political Education (COPEs). Meanwhile, international unions contributed their members' COPE donations to candidates and educated their members on issues and candidates' views through union publications, mailings and training for local officers and stewards. Local unions, central labor councils and state labor federations did the grass-roots work in local and state campaigns.

The AFL-CIO's structure—in which affiliated international unions hold the purse strings—limits the federation's political activities to those with the backing of member unions. These affiliated unions, which often have conflicting ideas about what the federation should be doing in the political arena, dominate governing conventions, where policy decisions are made. Individual unions can refuse financial support for policies supported by a majority of affiliates. In such a context, the very existence of Labor '96 is an accomplishment.

In his campaign for the AFL-CIO presidency last year, John Sweeney promised to forcefully assert the federation's presence in electoral politics. Rather than simply handing over money to the Democratic Party, the AFL-CIO decided to enter the political arena directly. With great fanfare last January, Sweeney announced the creation of a \$35 million political fund which would be used to defeat the 74 freshman Republican representatives and other Republicans opposed to the AFL-CIO's "working family agenda"—protecting Medicare and Social Security, making health care portable, increasing the minimum wage, and investing in education.

In targeted districts, the federation ran television ads, did mailings, staffed phone banks and provided staff coord-

dinators in an effort to inform union voters about candidates' records. Labor '96 customized its campaigns in each district to complement local and state political education efforts already in place. In the 10th District contest, for example, Labor '96 ran no TV ads but supported local union volunteers with mailings and phone banks.

Republicans and allied business groups were quick to call Labor '96 a failure. Sweeney, however, said the federation's campaign had reached its goals. He claimed credit for turning out 4 million more union voters than two years ago (though the number was still below the turnout in the 1992 national elections). He also credited the federation with the Republicans' loss of a dozen House seats. Eighteen Republicans, by Sweeney's count, were defeated after Labor '96 exposed their "anti-working family" voting records. Twelve of the 36 Republicans targeted by the federation's television ads lost their races. Labor '96 also helped the Democrats capture three open House seats and eight open Senate seats.

According to exit polls, 64 percent of union members voted for Clinton, while 68 percent voted for Democratic congressional candidates. Union voters' support for Democratic candidates rebounded strongly this year, up 7 to 10 percent over the 1994 elections. While Republicans accused the federation of trying to buy control of Congress with members' dues, exit polls showed that 75 percent of union members endorsed the idea of unions investing time and money in politics.

But not all unionists were happy with Labor '96. Despite the AFL-CIO's decision to strike out on its own, it supported only Democratic Party candidates, and advocated only "labor" issues. It remained conspicuously silent on NAFTA, GATT, welfare reform, fiduciary liability and other issues on which the federation is in disagreement with the Clinton administration and many congressional Democrats. "We have no chance of passing anything now," complains Brian McWilliams, president of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union. "Moreover, by targeting only Republicans, and not labor-hating conservative Democrats, we've antagonized other Republicans that we've worked with on specific issues."

Others question whether the AFL-CIO should have boasted quite so loudly about its \$35 million campaign budget. While corporations spent seven times more money on the election, they attracted far less attention doing it. Unions now face a backlash. Republicans in Congress back legislation that would require unions to send members quarterly reports on union dues spent on activities unrelated to collective bargaining and notify them of their right to demand rebates if they don't support those activities. This mandate would be an administrative and financial nightmare for unions.

Others argue that instead of spending the bulk of its money on high-priced television advertising, the AFL-CIO should have concentrated on grass-roots education campaigns in which union volunteers make person-to-person contact with voters in their local communities. Moreover,

these critics argue, that sort of outreach should not be limited to election cycles. "I applaud how Labor '96 helped shape the debate this year, but we need to focus on how to move people to action locally over the long term," says Amy Dean, head of San Jose's South Bay Labor Council, which has made a year-round commitment to political organizing. Some unionists also expressed disappointment that Labor '96 focused almost exclusively on congressional races. "We need to move planning and resources down to the local level," Dean says. "We need to develop local leaders and to build our neighborhood-based organizations."

The AFL-CIO can help reverse the long-term decline in working people's political participation only if its renewed commitment to workplace and community organizing translates into more resources for local union initiatives such as the Los Angeles Manufacturing Action Project. The latter, a joint labor-community organization, has helped low-wage industrial workers in the South-Central Los Angeles manufacturing corridor gain union representation. Labor '96 was most effective when its efforts complemented ongoing local union activity, rather than substituting for it. Ongoing political and community organizing—not spurts of political involvement every four years—is the key to getting labor's concerns heard in the halls of power.

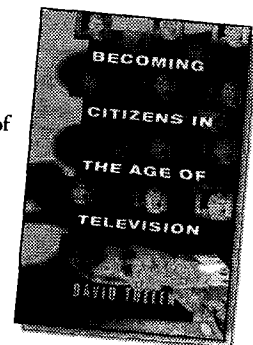
Peter Donohue is an economist based in Portland, Ore., who works with labor unions and community groups. This article was prepared with the research assistance of Michael Eisenscher.

BECOMING CITIZENS IN THE AGE OF TELEVISION

How Americans Challenged the Media and Seized Political Initiative during the Iran-Contra Debate

DAVID THELEN

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N I C A R A G U A

Butting heads

National elections opened a deep rift in a country still struggling with the hatreds of the '80s.

By David Dye
MANAGUA, NICARAGUA

In a homily delivered in Managua's new metropolitan cathedral three days before the national elections on October 20, Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo recited a not very biblical-sounding parable about a trusting human foolish enough to befriend an ailing snake, which promptly bit it to death. The parable was part of the cardinal's "orientation to Christians" about their duty vis-à-vis the electoral process.

Used to interpreting Obando's veiled language, Nicaraguan politicians and voters had no trouble deciphering who the prelate was alluding to. The devil in disguise was Sandinista presidential candidate Daniel Ortega. Ortega kept silent about the affair, not wishing to worsen matters. He had run on a new, moderate image, appealing to Nicaraguans

to trust him again. Late campaign polls showed Ortega rapidly narrowing the gap with the heavily favored right-wing Liberal Alliance candidate Arnoldo Alemán, the former mayor of Managua. But in the end, apparently heeding the prelate's words, voters handed Alemán an unexpectedly large margin of victory.

A whopping 80 percent of the eligible voting population came out to the polls. Although 26 political parties participated in this year's campaigns, voters went overwhelmingly for the frontrunners in the presidential contest, with 51 percent supporting Alemán and 38 percent supporting Ortega. Of the 93 seats in the National Assembly, the Liberal Alliance took 42, the Sandinistas took 37 (up from the eight they were left with when the Movement for the Renovation of Sandinismo split off over a year ago), and the remaining 14 seats were divided among nine other political parties. That means the Liberal Alliance and the Sandinistas will have to negotiate in the Assembly to win those parties to their side in any given

issue. In the 145 mayoral races, the Liberal Alliance took 91 while the Sandinistas won 52 (up from 13).

The fundamentalist Protestant political party, Christian Path, emerged to become the third force in Nicaraguan politics. The party, whose evangelism has a decidedly anti-Catholic tone, garnered 4 percent of the vote and won four seats in the National Assembly. Its leader, Guillermo Osorno, may become an important political rival of Obando. Whether Osorno will be a reliable ally of Daniel Ortega is not yet clear.

The cardinal's role in Alemán's victory was probably not decisive, but it may well have prevented a runoff. The main problem with Obando's venomous homily, however, was how it fed into the widening, ever more vicious rift between left and right in a country which has been struggling for years to get past the raw hatreds left behind by the contra war of the '80s.

The results marked the second straight defeat for the Sandinistas, who dominated Nicaraguan politics in the '80s. In fact, the Sandinistas received virtually the same proportion of the presidential vote this year as they did six years ago. In 1990, the debate between the Sandinistas and the United Nicaragua Opposition (UNO), headed by Violeta Chamorro, focused on the question of which party could lead the country to peace. This time around, the debate focused on which party would lead Nicaragua back to the past. The Sandinistas claimed that a Liberal Alliance victory would mean a return to the days of the Somoza dictatorship, while Alemán's supporters warned that a Sandinista victory would mean a return to the years of war and economic collapse.

The Sandinistas said they had learned from their past mistakes. This time, they placed a new emphasis on inclusiveness at the expense of ideology, offering what they called "a government for all." They no longer promised the dramatic social changes of the '80s—land reform, literacy brigades, massive government spending for health and education. Instead, their economic platform offered what Sandinista candidate Victor Hugo Tinoco described as "differences of shading" from the Liberal Alliance free-market strategy of economic reactivation by encouraging foreign investment.

The election, however, has now bequeathed a face-off between large right- and left-wing voter blocs. The Sandinistas' official response to their defeat has been to charge fraud and to claim they will not recognize the new Liberal Alliance government as legitimate. The FSLN, along with a number of other political parties, is asking for the elections in the departments of Matagalpa and Managua to be voided. This posture has international election observers in a quandary. Observers reported that the process was marred by two factors: political partisanship on the part of some election officials, and the government's failure to allocate sufficient resources to process all the votes in a timely and efficient manner. However, while there were massive irregularities in the voting, most observers believe they were produced mostly by simple disorganization, not skullduggery.

Mariano Fiallos, the former head of Nicaragua's Supreme Electoral Council who had agreed to serve as Ortega's foreign minister, criticized a new election law that stipulated that members of the electoral councils for each department were to be chosen from lists presented by the political parties. He pleaded, however, with his party to refrain from fraud charges. "For the good of Nicaragua," he argued, "we must not put either the institutions or the future stability of the country, about which we insisted so strongly in the campaign, at the slightest risk."

The plea fell on deaf ears. If raw vote totals were not always clear, Sandinista media and spokespeople distorted "discrepancies" to buttress their charges of vote-tampering. The left media made much of numerous differences between initial results telegraphed to the Supreme Electoral Council and the actual numbers recorded in the minutes from voting tables. When the latter were recounted at Sandinista request, Alemán's lead over Ortega actually increased.

The real extent of fraud in the October election—and who committed it—may never be known. But in the opinion of many Nicaraguan analysts, the Sandinista charges have less to do with whether votes were recorded unfairly than with the survival strategy of Ortega.

Ortega's second election defeat in a row may be fatal, producing an upheaval in Sandinista party leadership. But as a strong caudillo enjoying blind personal loyalty from many of his followers, "Daniel" will not easily be dislodged as the FSLN leader. He does have problems, however. Hav-

ing convinced the party faithful that they were going to win, he needs someone to blame for his loss. According to some accounts of internal Sandinista politics, he must also look over his shoulder at more radical elements in the party who may be preparing the ground to challenge his hold at the next party convention, which will be held in 1997.

If this view is correct, charges of fraud—made plausible by very real irregularities—fit Ortega's needs like a glove. They help in another respect as well, readying the party base for combat with the incoming Liberal Alliance government. After her 1990 victory, Chamorro accommodated herself to Sandinista power—retaining Humberto Ortega as head of the army and distancing herself from the right-wing sector of the UNO coalition. But Alemán and his "Liberal hordes" truculently assert a mandate to govern on behalf of, among others, property owners whose farms, homes and other assets were confiscated by the Sandinistas in 1979. For many Sandinistas, any attempt to take back this property is going for the jugular.

The coming conflicts will test the mettle of Nicaragua's fledgling institutions, which have been dealt a setback by the conduct of this election and its aftermath. The Sandinistas will probably swallow their pride and accept a major role in the emerging system. Under the new constitution promulgated in 1995, the National Assembly and the mayoralities have much more power than they did under the Chamorro government. Therefore, the Sandinistas elected to those offices will have considerable leverage. Important policy initiatives, such as economic adjustment measures, now have to be approved by the National Assembly. In the absence of the kind of concessions made by Chamorro, the Sandinistas will have little incentive to be a constructive opposition, and will contest the Alemán administration at every possible turn.

David Dye is a freelance journalist based in Managua.

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I N T H E A R T S

Warped drives

**Star Trek:
First Contact
is a plea to
make the
world safe for
our inner
robots.**

By Bill Boisvert

S

tar Trek movies provide brief respites from the TV series' never-ending treadmill of mirthless camp, offering bigger budgets, the chance to hear the word "bullshit" spoken on screen, and the fleeting release of the money shot, when the crew finally gets to sit back and *let* the ship go down in flames. The latest installment, *Star Trek: First Contact*, delivers as expected on the production values: The pacing is brisk, the sets opulent, the writing fluent, the special effects special. The characters meet the many point-less deadlines of a plot that effortlessly blocks their stabs at recognizable human behavior. Yet *First Contact* is a strangely half-hearted affair, as if the filmmakers themselves had grown impatient with their franchise's shibboleths. The crew seems frazzled and bitter. Captain Picard's

blustering *fuhrerprinzip* evokes the usual "he's the Captain; we obey his orders," but this time uttered with a hollow-eyed mixture of despondency and contempt. The Prime Directive is openly mocked. Even the Auto-Destruct Sequence is perfunctory—it gets aborted with whole minutes to spare.

First Contact opens with an attack on Earth by the Borg, the remorseless half-human, half-machine cyborg race that terrified the Federation over several TV episodes. Defeated in battle, the Borg open a "temporal vortex" and travel back in time to conquer the technologically backward Earth of the year 2063. The *Enterprise* pursues the Borg ship into the past and destroys it, only to find that the Borg have damaged the Earthlings' prototype warp drive that was supposed to power the first starship into space the very next day; even worse, the Borg have managed to sneak onto the *Enterprise* itself. The bulk of the movie chronicles the crew's struggles to launch the warp-drive spacecraft at the appointed hour and keep the Borg from taking over the *Enterprise*.

But the storyline is just an excuse to rehash *Star Trek's* familiar psychosexual anxieties. The hackneyed time-travel device provides an excuse for the return of the repressed primitive: a mid-21st century, post-nuclear wasteland where people live in metal shacks, cook over open fires, engage in tribal warfare with other "factions," and dress in stylish fur garments that suggest *Mad Max* as outfitted by Ralph Lauren. The inventor of the warp-drive, one Zephraim Cochran, turns out to be a wastrel who swills tequila, listens to rock 'n' roll and scandalizes the Starfleet officers by going into the woods to "take a leak." His only goal in building the spaceship is to make enough money to "retire to some tropical island—with naked women." He fills the role normally played in *Star Trek* by the Ferengi/Jews—that of a conveniently displaced receptacle for the other characters' ids. This frees the crew members to focus their libidinal energies on the warp contraption itself, provocatively housed in an old nuclear missile. In one ecstatic scene, Data and Picard stroke the missile's bulbous tip and gleaming shaft, while the ultra-feminine Counselor Troi stands near them to absorb and neutralize excess homoeroticism.

The idyll ends when Data and Picard return to the *Enterprise* to deal with the Borg incursion into Deck 16. Oddly, the Borg never attack the crew members, except in self-defense. Their main targets are the ship's illumination and climate-control systems. As the lights dim and the temperature rises to a steamy "39.1°C with 92 percent humidity," the Borg seem to pose a largely inchoate threat of darkness, moisture and confinement. They are slowly turning the *Enterprise* into a womb.

The menace crystallizes in the person of the Borg Queen,

ELLIOTT MARKS

**Star Trek: First Contact**Directed by
Jonathan Frakes

resplendent in her leather dominatrix outfit. While the ordinary Borg is a male of tinny voice and spastic, lumbering gait, the Borg Queen (after some assembly) is lithe and sinuous, her voice by turns lilting and husky. When Data falls into her clutches, she sets about inflaming his android lust—addling his positronic brain with tantric murmurs, grafting on cybernetic flesh so he can feel her caresses. But she can also tear a man down: When Picard offers himself to her in exchange for Data's release, she scorns him and vows to turn him into one of her neutered drones. Her drive to "assimilate" the *Enterprise* and its crew embodies the twin dangers of engulfment and castration that female flesh always presents to the male identity.

I shudder to invoke such crude schematism. But without it, the narrative would be as ludicrous and inexplicable as a dream. Trekkies, of course, *prefer* their dreams uninterpreted. No matter how glaring its contradictions, they will always take *Star Trek's* muscular New Age utopia at face value: a post-scarcity society imbued not with lassitude but with heroic zeal, led by a world-obliterating military machine hell-bent on spreading therapy and conciliation throughout the galaxy. Yet neither Trekkie positivism nor the psychoanalytic subtexts with which the screenwriters tease academics offer any real insight into *Star Trek*.

The central and meaningful action of every *Star Trek* episode is simply the upkeep and repair of a starship. And it's not just gobbledygook filler; it's a sustained commentary on our present-day struggles to preserve our social and

moral autonomy in the face of technological change. Like us, the crew of the *Enterprise* must constantly worry about its mastery of the means of scientific production and steer a narrow course between the perils of under- and overdevelopment. On one side lie primitive societies who must wait passively to "evolve" into Federation-style modernity. On the other are more advanced beings whose science has grown so far beyond their control that they have literally fused with their own technology. They have become floating points of light, or disembodied voices emanating from beyond the nebulae, or the omnipotent Q, who, when asked how he performs his miracles, can only respond, "I don't know. You just ... do it."

Q's sense of bafflement at his capabilities never afflicts the crew of the *Enterprise*; Starfleet's power is grounded in a thorough comprehension of its own quite tangible machinery. With their endless, obsessive ritual of diagnostic followed by manual override followed by reconfiguration followed by new damage report, the crew constantly reassures us that human agency remains distinct from and superior to its technological environment.

Among the Borg, though, the dichotomy of subordination is reversed: It is the Borg ship which reconfigures the human bodies aboard it. The Borg embody the Federation's suppressed understanding that humanity can be reduced to the adjunct of a machine civilization. Flaunting their grotesque implants and prosthetic limbs, they violate the barrier between the personal and the technological which *Star Trek* otherwise polices so rigorously.

But there are two sides to that barricade, and *First Contact* insinuates that we're on the wrong one. The *real* nightmare is the horrible incursion of the biological into the pristine world of the artificial. The Borg's great perversion, driven home by the garish contrast between their chrome grillwork and slimy pelts, is that they are still, after all, half-human. What repulses us about the Borg Queen is not the metal conduits that pierce and truncate her body, but the fact that they are sullied by contact with her pale, damp, squamous flesh.

Like Data, we must escape from her. We must scrub away the nauseating residue of organic being and sever our last link to carnal sensation, lest the smooth functioning of our emotion chips be disturbed. We must make the world safe for the robot within. ◀

IN PRINT

The Spirit of '76

By Barbara Garson

During the Vietnam War, I worked in the Shelter Half, a GI coffee house near Fort Lewis Army Base in Tacoma, Wash. Student radicals established these cultural outposts (I knew of more than 30) in isolated base towns with the modest goal of making friendly contact, or at least beginning to break down the hostility, between soldiers and "the movement."

Hostility? It turned out that when any long-hair (male or female) approached an army base, comradely fists were raised from the back of trucks and V signs appeared from nowhere. GIs were at least as anti-war as the rest of their generation and had already invented new forms of protest ingeniously geared to base life.

In my first week at the Shelter Half, I met one group that had changed the beneficiary on their military life insurance policies to the Black Panther Party: "I just wanted to see the guy have to type that up in quintuplicate and send it up to the Pentagon." An entire company canceled their U.S. savings bonds because "the war sucks and I'm not going to pay for it." Another basic training company refused to get out of bed at 6 a.m. on a Sunday morning. Their sergeant had ordered them to police the grounds (clean up) because he'd heard that the lieutenant's wife might pass by on her way to church. Despite threats of court-martial, the entire group stuck together, discovering, when the sergeant backed down, that "a mutiny is more of a black eye for the CO (commanding officer) than for the men."

The soldiers back from Nam, who hung around the coffee house waiting for their discharge papers, tended to be quieter than the stateside GIs. They found it difficult, I think, to talk to people who hadn't been there. Still, for every official mutiny—"Sir, My Men Refuse to Go"—that hit the headlines, I collected a dozen stories of negotiated refusals that took the form, "You let us sit here; we'll let you send in that body count."

Judging from the guys at Fort Lewis, no one so much as fired a gun in Vietnam. Of course that couldn't be true. In

the coffee house atmosphere, "I stayed stoned the whole time" was a convenient boast, I assumed; once in Vietnam, soldiers had to do what they were ordered, right?

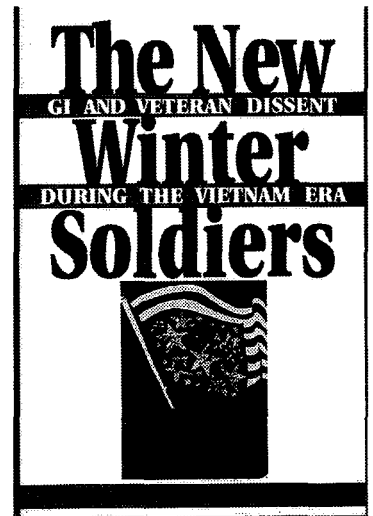
In *The New Winter Soldiers*, Richard Moser marshals a range of sources including military documents and moving personal interviews to estimate that in addition to a massive general slowdown, about 20 percent of Vietnam GIs took some form of positive action to end the war. Dissent ranged from writing to members of Congress (250,000 GI letters in 1972) to collecting petition signatures in downtown Saigon, from pray-in to mutiny, from combat refusal to fragging (killing unpopular officers).

Twenty percent is an extraordinary figure for any kind of political activity, let alone for something as dangerous and psychologically complex as opposing a war from the front lines. To me, it suggests that the move to an air war in 1971 was a military response to the fact that the U.S. army could no longer move its troops on the ground. Moser believes that the Pentagon's memory of GI dissent in Vietnam has curtailed U.S. military intervention for the rest of the century.

The New Winter Soldiers illuminates not only the breadth of GI resistance but its historical and emotional depth.

According to Moser, the United States has two distinct military heroes: the efficient killer and the citizen-soldier. The efficient killer—Indian Fighter, Rough Rider, Rambo—comes from our expansionist wars. Fighting alone or in a disciplined phalanx, he savagely clears out space for civilization. But from the Civil War and our Revolution comes the quintessentially American citizen-soldier. He's the Minute Man, the armed abolitionist, the Winter Soldier Tom Paine addressed at Valley Forge. When his enlistment was up and the sunshine soldiers were going home to plant, this Winter Soldier stayed on, not from attachment to some military ethos but from loyalty to his country's highest ideals.

There's no doubt that anti-war GIs were conscious of this historical connection. GI papers like *Fatigue Press* carried the revolutionary war motto "Rebellion to Tyranny is Obedience to God." *Shakedown's* masthead featured the photo of a GI giving a raised fist salute to the statue of a Minute Man. Many base papers used the coiled rattlesnake that warns "Don't Tread



The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam Era
by Richard Moser
Rutgers University Press
219 pp., \$18.95

on Me.” (Incidentally, a 1972 State Department survey counted 245 such publications. *Fed-Up*, at Fort Lewis, had a press run of 10,000. And that was never enough.)

In 1971, the Vietnam Veterans Against the War conducted the Winter Soldiers’ Investigation, three days of testimony by veterans on American war crimes. “Like the Winter Soldiers of 1776 who stayed on after they had finished their time,” said William Crandell in the Investigation’s opening statement, “we veterans of Vietnam know that our country is in grave danger.” Crandell characterized joining the VVAW (it had 25,000 members at the time) as volunteering for “a second tour as citizen-soldiers, in an effort to end an unjust war and bring our brothers and sisters home.”

The Investigation was, of course, a publicity event, but this language wasn’t mere P.R. These young veterans traipsing around the country in their boots, headbands, beads and slept-in fatigues couldn’t help looking like George Washington’s army. Whether you photographed them at the mimeo, beer can in hand, or silhouetted with banners against the U.S. Capitol, it always came out like the Spirit of ’76.

Anti-war soldiers did become an army of citizen-soldiers, and that army was key to our victory in Vietnam—the victory of the anti-war movement. These men and women (including GIs, vets, draft dodgers and deserters, all in the same khakis) served longer, took more chances, and were active on more fronts than any other element of the peace movement. But their profound need for military identification is something I didn’t understand until I read *The New Winter Soldiers*.

Because Fort Lewis was an army base, I was most familiar with draftees from blue-collar families. They had a tradition of serving in the army, but they also had a tradition of frustrating the foreman/officer who pushed them too hard. Moser’s contacts, on the other hand, are largely among Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps volunteers. For these men, disillusionment with the military was so devastating that they couldn’t recover until they had found an army and a tradition they could serve in with integrity.

The first half of basic training is deliberately designed to break down a new soldier’s civilian identity. The second half is supposed to build up a new military identity. But for many Vietnam-era recruits, this never happened. Their youth and need to feel part of something meant that these disaffected GIs tried on many costumes in quick succession. Example: “Didn’t some Indians have a big council before they went to war? Yeah, the Iroquois, and they all had to agree. Well, aren’t I part Indian? Maybe not Iroquois, but—” On this basis, someone would sit down and write an article for the base paper on American democracy and the need for a consensus army.

Because Moser relies heavily on GI papers, he may be over-generous when he concludes that most anti-war GIs were feminists or anti-racists or socialist egalitarians. They were, to the extent that they were young people in the ’60s,

but it only took one person to write the idea down. And at some of the coffee houses (though not at Fort Lewis) the civilian staff would keep the base paper going when the nucleus of active GIs was broken up by the army. But if Moser’s newspaper quotes may not be as representative of anti-war GIs as he would like them to be, his interviews ring true. They introduce us to a generation of soldiers who decided in the middle of a war that their country was wrong and set out to do something about it.

Were they 20 percent of the U.S. military as Moser estimates, 37 percent as David Cortwright suggested in *Soldiers in Revolt* or, as at Fort Lewis, a shifting corps of a few hundred that organized the demonstrations and published the newspapers but had a majority of the 20,000 or so at the base behind them?

Whatever their true numbers in the ’60s and early ’70s, it was sad indeed when their history got rewritten in the ’80s. Vietnam vets are now remembered as victims of the peace movement instead of its heroes.

Men have always exaggerated their war stories. The country will be a lot safer when they start exaggerating their anti-war stories. If only *The New Winter Soldiers* could become as well-known as Rambo. A generation of brave veterans could then brag to their grandchildren that they single-handedly lost the war in Vietnam. ◀

Barbara Carson is the author of two classic books on work, *All the Livelong Day* and *The Electronic Sweatshop* (both from Penguin).



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The case of the disappearing work

By Bob Fitch

In 1916, Carl Sandburg's famous, Whitmanesque defense of his beloved working-class city appeared. "Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle," Sandburg exulted in *Chicago Poems*, "Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job."

Today, 80 years later, the city's laughter is less hearty, the string of victories was broken a long time ago, and Chicago is no longer piling job on job. Throughout wide stretches of its South and West Side ghettos, now the largest contiguous ghetto in the United States, most adults aren't working at all.

William Julius Wilson's latest book, *When Work Disappears*, tries to explain why the jobs left, why it matters, and what can be done to put ghetto dwellers back to work. It's the most ambitious study yet undertaken by America's leading poverty expert. The former chair of the University of Chicago sociology department, sometime Clinton adviser and present Dream Team member of Harvard's Afro-American studies department has produced a 322-page work crammed with charts, graphs and tables. The book is packed with detailed and costly survey research. Wilson has supervised teams of researchers who've fanned out across the city to probe black and white employer attitudes on race; he's had them examine how job loss affected residents in South Side neighborhoods like Woodlawn and Oakland; his task forces have interviewed adolescents to see how character forms in these high risk areas. Three pages of acknowledgments suggest the scope of Wilson's labor-intensive research.

To fund his operation, Wilson received grants from America's three largest foundations—Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie. He also got money from the MacArthur Research Program, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the William T. Grant Foundation, the Lloyd A. Fry

Foundation, the Woods Charitable Fund and the Chicago Community Trust. The federal government chipped in, too.

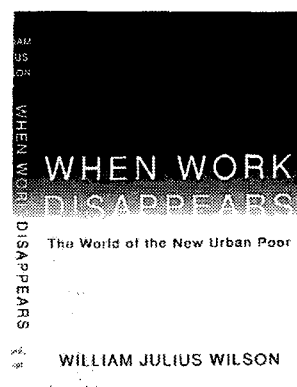
Since Wilson has now made his celebrated move to Cambridge, *When Work Disappears* will probably stand for some time as the definitive modern expression of the Chicago School of Sociology. Throughout the text, he pours frequent libations to his Chicago School ancestors, who created the modern discipline of urban sociology in the teens and '20s. It was they who invented fieldwork research, publishing an influential series of monographs on poverty, ethnicity and urban development at almost exactly the same time Sandburg published *Chicago Poems*.

It was the Chicagoans who invented America's unique contribution to poverty discourse: the culture of poverty thesis. Victorian social Darwinists blamed poverty on poor individual habits that children acquired from shiftless parents. Continental Marxists looked at class-based income distribution and re-distribution. Sociologists of the Chicago School were the first to focus on the geographic dimensions of poverty: They claimed that people living in concentrated poverty developed values and attitudes that in turn perpetuated poverty.

Despite its near-circularity, the culture of poverty thesis provided urban policy-makers and planners with badly needed validation for Progressive era city-shaping strategies. The old conservatism provided a guide for what *not* to do for the poor: give them government relief, which would just make them breed more. But it was unilluminating about what cities were supposed to do with the poor in spatial terms. Where to put them?

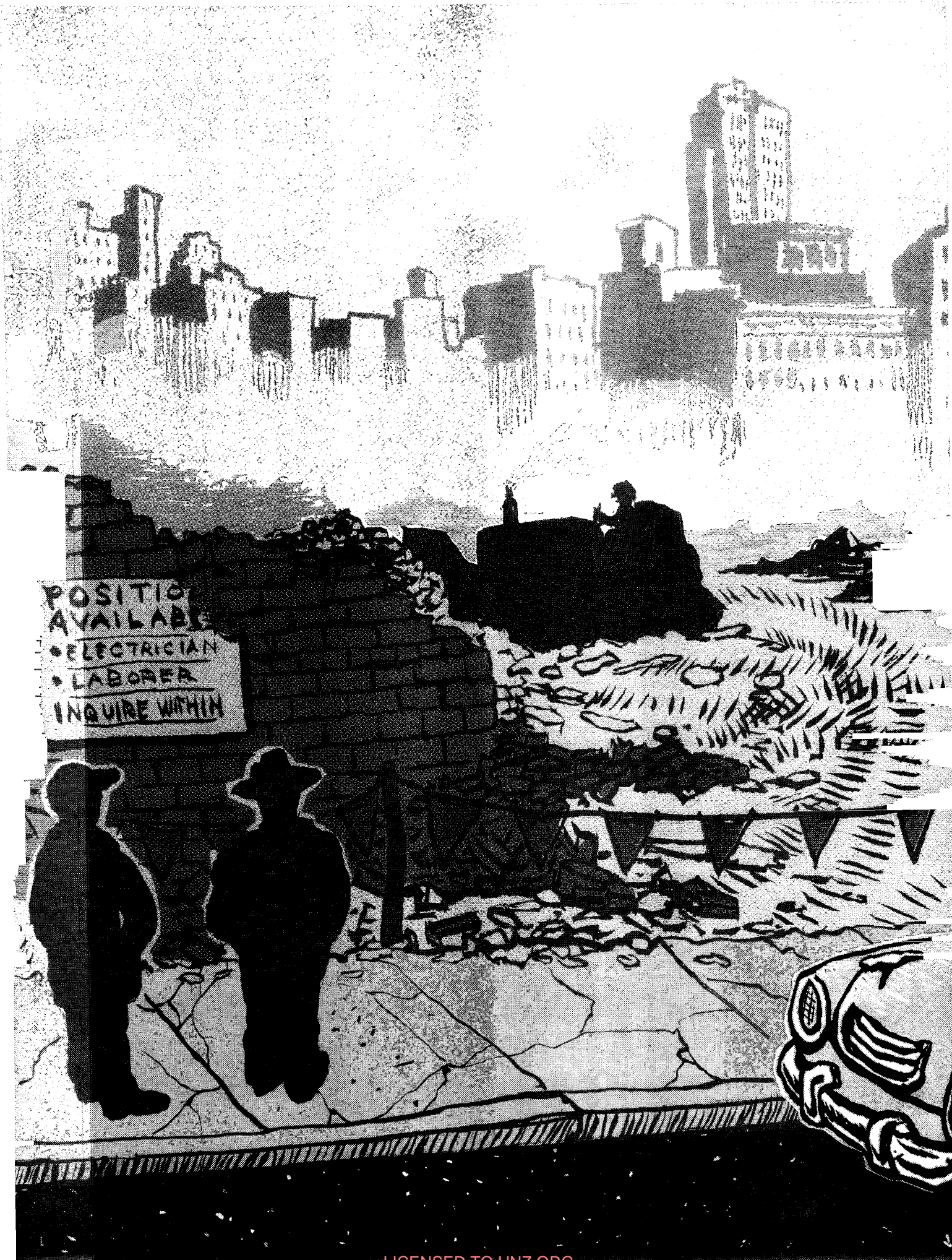
The question was urgent. Between 1910 and 1920, urban elites had begun to zone, plan and segregate American cities as never before. The invention of the high-rise office building offered real estate and finance an unparalleled opportunity to create towering land values, but only if the city were reorganized around the central business district, and only if all the potentially high-value land uses were segregated from the low. This required clear separations: no factories in an office district. Maximum concentration of land values also required separation of people by race and income.

Chicago, which led America in office development, led in urban planning too, adopting the first business-sponsored municipal plan in 1910. And in 1916, the Chicago School weighed in with its series of innovative studies. There was the "natural areas" concept—certain ethnic groups naturally gravitate to specific places. There was the neighborhood-



**When Work Disappears:
The World of the New
Urban Poor**

By William Julius Wilson
Alfred A. Knopf
322 pp., \$26



level analysis—neighborhoods as the basic unit in the study of cities. There was even the complementary notion of community self-help that underpins the present urban strategies of the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations.

Chicago School scholars emerged as the prophets of “community development”—later known as “urban renewal.” The University of Chicago sociology department established its first research station in 1935, near what would become the Cabrini-Green housing project. This ghetto neighborhood near the Gold Coast would later be demolished to save its wealthy neighbors. Today it is being demolished again—some say, once again to promote the “highest and best” use of real estate (see “Razing the second ghetto,” page 7). Chicagoan Saul Alinsky—recently but unfairly fingered as Hillary Clinton’s “Leninist” mentor—developed his strategy for purely neighborhood radicalism within the Chicago School framework.

When *Work Disappears* thus represents the most complete statement of the second-generation Chicago School urbanism, and of Wilson’s own two decades of meditation on the causes of ghetto poverty. All his key Chicagoesque positions reappear, mostly unqualified. Recall that in his much-maligned, much-praised first book, *The Declining Significance of Race*, Wilson argued that the passage of equal employment legislation meant the problems of the black “underclass” no longer grew out of racial discrimination, but out of “structural changes in the economy.”

This line of argument tended to minimize the irrational racial fears and hatreds that buttressed residential segregation. From 1919 through 1968, Chicago erupted again and again in violent racial conflicts that frequently ended only with the arrival of state or federal troops. Chicago was notorious as well for the work of “block busters”—real estate agents who exploited white fears of invading blacks. Yet in the spirit of the Chicago School, Wilson instead wrote of natural competition between black and white workers for scarce housing stock.

Wilson’s next book, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, created strongly ambivalent reactions, too. Liberal sociologists appreciated the scholarship behind his informed attack on Charles Murray’s neo-Victorian argument that government programs, especially the War on Poverty, actually caused poverty. Why, for example, haven’t far more liberal welfare provisions created far greater poverty in Finland, where child poverty stands at 2.5 percent as opposed to our 21.5 percent?

But Wilson also continued his puzzling insistence that discrimination against blacks was of declining importance. He cited unconvincing evidence that police were not disproportionately likely to arrest blacks. And he praised Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s discovery of the roots of black poverty in chattel slavery’s pernicious effects on the black family. Waving aside Herbert Guttman’s careful longitudinal studies on the comparative integrity of the black family during slavery and Reconstruction, Wilson insisted that the historical effect of past discrimination on black culture was

more important than any present discrimination. (By a similar logic, the growing number of poor, white single-parent households in Great Britain during the ’90s would have to be explained as the “historical effect” of medieval serfdom.)

In policy terms, Wilson’s larger point was to try to put aside both ancient memories and present antagonisms. Liberals should unite behind federal full-employment policies favoring “the truly disadvantaged” of all races. The conservative policy onslaught would not be stopped, he insisted, with the hot air of moral self-righteousness. Poverty had to be explained, not simply denounced. What was needed were solid sociological analyses of families, neighborhoods and the impact of the global economy. And this is what Wilson has delivered in *When Work Disappears*.

In Chicago, Wilson points out, most blacks *are* working. It’s just in some neighborhoods that they aren’t. It’s those neighborhoods—rapidly declining in population—that provide Wilson with his constant subject: the neighborhood basis of the culture of poverty.

The old culture of poverty thesis explained poverty simply in terms of too many poor people reinforcing each other’s bad cultural habits. In the early versions, Chicago scholars like Park and Burgess relied on “human ecology,” which naturalized real estate competition by comparing people to plants. Plants compete for space and light. So must people. Plants are territorial. So are people.

Wilson replaces the old determinism of plant competition with the new determinism of the competitive global marketplace. This is a lot more plausible. No one would deny that economic competition operates on a global basis. But how does global competition produce job loss *in these neighborhoods*?

Wilson’s argument hinges on the timing of job loss. If you look at the 1950 Census, you see that labor force participation was just as high in poor, black neighborhoods as it was in white neighborhoods—slightly lower among men, considerably higher among women. But by 1960, a black-white differential starts to be noticeable.

The crucial question is *when* blacks began to leave the labor market. The actual dates undercut Charles Murray, who reasoned superficially about the origins of black poverty from national unemployment statistics. “Why aren’t blacks working,” he asked, “when national unemployment is low?” Triumphantly he pointed to the welfare explosion of the late ’60s as the cause of present low labor-force participation in the ghetto. In fact, the welfare explosion followed, rather than preceded, the jobs implosion.

So what happened to jobs in the crucial period of the ’50s and early ’60s? According to Wilson, world market forces started to operate. He mentions Western Electric’s decision to close its Hawthorne plant, but that didn’t happen until 1987. Sears moved out in ’73. International Harvester shut down, he says, in the “late ’60s.” Wilson’s dates don’t back up his thesis. It’s the ’50s that need to be explained.

What did happen to Chicago ghettos in the ’50s? We

don't need to put V.I. Warshawski on the case. There must be a million people in Chicago who still remember "urban renewal." Even Wilson's ample research budget would be taxed with interviewing them all. But we don't have to rely on folk memories of the bulldozers and mass population clearances. We don't even have to rely on the Kerner Commission Report, which identified urban renewal as the cause of the 1968 riots. A whole scholarly literature exists that Wilson unaccountably fails to cite.

Arnold Hirsch's *Making the Second Ghetto* shows how urban renewalists in Chicago not only cleared out South Side areas near the Loop, but created a new, even more impoverished West Side ghetto with the refugees. Anyone who lives in a Chicago high-rise can see from their window the crude way South Side blacks were bulldozed out of their neighborhoods. Nearly everything from Roosevelt Road (just south of the Loop) to 38th Street was flattened. Along with houses went small factories, shops, stores. The black refugees were pushed into the ghastly "projects," like the Robert Taylor Homes, which march at regular intervals, each exactly the same height, for miles along the Dan Ryan Expressway.

In residential neighborhoods on the South Side near the Loop, like Lake Meadows and Prairie Shores, residential high-rises designed for integrated upper middle-class tenants eventually arose from the rubble. Elite institutions like the Illinois Institute of Technology and Michael Reese Hospital carried out their own complementary clearances. Chicago's urban renewal movement was financed and orchestrated by the same real estate elites that carried it out elsewhere—dynastic families like the Fields, big real estate developers like Fred Kramer, and financial institutions like New York Life, which made the mortgages.

But the largest local urban renewal project of all was carried out by Wilson's long-time employer, the University of Chicago. Except for John D. Rockefeller III's clearances at Lincoln Center, the U of C's was probably America's most famous and comprehensive clearance. With an initial \$100,000 grant from the Marshall Field Foundation, planners analyzed how best to carve out the cancer of black poverty from the neighborhood. Eventually, some 100 acres—containing more than 6,000 dwellings—were leveled in the area between 47th and 59th Streets and between Cottage Grove and the lake. In the space of 10 years, Hyde Park lost 27.9 percent of its population. Harper Court, a retail mall set up for a handful of displaced artisans, scarcely made up for the devastation.

Teaching at the U of C, how could Wilson not know about this? Trying to explain the post-'50s decline, how could he not mention it? You could argue, perhaps, that urban renewal is like slavery: It's best to put it behind us. But "negro removal" continues. And Wilson not only supports policy strategies to get blacks out of the central city, he provides their essential theoretical justification.

In the broadest sense, how does Wilson explain poverty?

The Chicago way: by focusing on the neighborhood. Poverty is caused by having too many poor people in one neighborhood. Thin out the numbers of the poor in poor neighborhoods, or put them in suburbs, and there will be less poverty. That's why Wilson backs the *Gautreaux* program—the plan developed under court order in 1976 to move blacks from public housing projects into subsidized housing in neighborhoods "throughout the Greater Chicago Area." Wilson laments that government can only spend a quarter billion dollars over two years on these relocations. But the whole federal housing program under Clinton is *Gautreaux* writ large.

Just how true this is was illustrated in the Kemp-Gore vice-presidential debates. Both candidates agreed federal housing must go, but they disagreed on how to dismantle it. Gore wanted to knock down the units and give the former tenants vouchers to move out of the city. Kemp wanted to sell the units to the renters, who would now live in co-ops that would no longer receive federal subsidies. Who says there are no differences between the two parties? Urban-based elites of the Democratic Party want blacks in the suburbs. Suburban-based Republicans want them to stay in the cities.

Only when you realize that the real estate interests who dictate the Democrats' urban policy are the same ones who—via foundations like Rockefeller and MacArthur—pay the bills for Wilson's pricey research do his prescriptions begin to make sense. There's a logic to Wilson's dogged insistence, even post-Rodney King, and now post-Texaco, that blacks don't face employment discrimination. The semi-official theory of poverty is "jobs-skills spatial mismatch": The unskilled jobs are in the suburbs, the unskilled people are in the cities. If, on the other hand, there were systematic discrimination in employment, what point would there be to sending blacks out to the suburbs? They'd just be discriminated against there, too.

In *When Work Disappears*, Wilson presents himself as the great advocate of jobs. This is not completely false. But it's not really true either. Wilson supports *some* jobs programs. He promotes job "mobility" for blacks: programs that remove blacks from the city. Job training is okay with him. And he's also enthusiastic about jobs programs that are paid for with federal as opposed to local taxes. But what about bringing jobs to the central cities? What about even a mild Harold Washington-type effort to at least retain factory jobs or promote urban re-industrialization? Not a word.

There is a missing real estate dimension to poverty. But it's not provided by the Chicago School in either its first or second generations. If Wilson really wants to contribute to understanding the causes of urban poverty, a good place to start would be to study the actions of those who've been sending him checks for the last two decades.

Bob Fitch is the author of *The Assassination of New York* (Verso).

SPEED READING

The curse of the working class

By David Futrelle

Working Sober: The Transformation of an Occupational Drinking Culture

By William J. Sonnenstuhl

ILR Press/Cornell University Press
143 pp., \$35 cloth, \$14.95 paper

Some of the most intractable struggles in American labor history have been fought not over wages or working conditions but over drink. Before the advent of industrialization, we tend to forget, alcohol was as much the drink of choice on the job as coffee is today. In those days, laborers and their employers tended to work side by side in the same shops; working hours were irregular and often quite relaxed, punctuated by frequent bouts of convivial drinking.

But as workshops became factories, historian Paul Johnson has argued, drinking was itself transformed from "an ancient bond between classes [to] an angry badge of working-class status." As such, drinking became a favorite target of middle- and upper-class reformers—most of them less concerned with safe workplaces than with quiet ones. In the minds of reformers, the words "sober" and "industrious" went together. In the late 19th century, saloons provided a welcome respite for young male workers otherwise confined to the dreary life of the boarding-house. For union organizers, the saloons were sources of possible recruits, while to some observers they were the "rooster-crow of the spirit of democracy." Moralistic campaigns against the saloons in those years were only barely disguised battles in the ceaseless class war against the poor.

In looking back at these battles, it's hard not to sympathize with the workers facing off against meddlesome, transparently self-interested bluenoses. But as heavy drinking has come to be seen less as a pleasure or a sin and more as an addiction, many within the labor movement and without have concluded that such drinking (while con-

ducive to an elemental worker solidarity) is hardly in the best interests of the workers themselves. Drink has a different meaning today, both on the job and off; few see drink, much less habitual drunkenness, as a proud symbol of a hard-working life.

In *Working Sober*, sociologist and recovery expert William Sonnenstuhl provides us with labor history for the clean and sober age. The book, limited in its focus but potentially broad in its implications, describes how one particular group of workers—the New York City tunnel diggers known as "sandhogs"—transformed their "occupational drinking culture" into a sober one. Unlike many "just say no" programs, which were imposed from above by managers less concerned with safety than with efficiency, this transformation was initiated by the workers themselves, inspired by an alcoholic sandhog who'd found a kind of salvation in the 12-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Sandhogging is dirty and dangerous work; a century ago, deaths were common. Though conditions for tunnel miners are a little more civilized today, the job still involves crawling about in the muck hundreds of feet under the city and regularly setting off large quantities of explosives.

For years, drinking on and off the job helped to nurture camaraderie among the beleaguered sandhogs. But during the '70s, when New York City's financial crisis threatened the very existence of their profession, a sandhog named "Jimmy M." stepped forward to tell his comrades that the fate of their lives and their community depended upon their achieving sobriety. The message struck a chord. Today, Sonnenstuhl notes, "intemperate drinking has lost its symbolic hold on the sandhogs"; meanwhile, the rituals of mutual aid at the heart of AA have "become more salient for the strengthening of their communal bonds."

It's an inspirational story, in its way—at least if you're willing to excuse the sometimes coercive conformism at the heart of AA. Sonnenstuhl's writing, unfortunately, is pedestrian, and he makes only rudimentary efforts to draw out the broader political and historical implications of the story he tells. *Working Sober* can't provide much of a guide for management reformers, because workers—for good reason—are generally suspicious of programs imposed from on high. Nor is it likely to provide much inspiration for those seeking ways to rekindle labor solidarity outside the hothouse atmosphere of this tiny and dwindling profession.

Nevertheless, *Working Sober* serves as a reminder that sobriety and labor militancy are not intrinsically opposed: The militant drunk of labor history may be as much an anachronism as the happy drunk of Martin and Lewis comedies. And, perhaps more importantly, the book shows how much more effective workplace reforms can be when they are initiated from below. ◀



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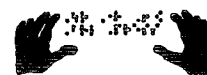
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Continued from page 40

the ubiquity of money. A couple of weeks ago, I ran low on gas in the middle of France. I was near Poitiers, where Charles Martel beat back the Muslims in 732, thus allowing Christendom the opportunity to gradually abandon its distaste for usury, invent double-entry bookkeeping and bring us into the modern era of megamoney. My need for *essence*, as the French call it, occurred at the noon hour. I pulled into a gas station at exactly 12:30. The proprietor was flipping his sign from "ouvert" to "fermé." My pleas were to no avail. He referred to his watch, then to his stomach, and gave me a sympathetic "tant pis" as he locked up and headed home for lunch. I travel often to France for many reasons, one of them being that it's a country where some things, like lunch, are more important than making a buck. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for my own country. Except possibly for certain banking zones in Switzerland and some Thatcherite cottages in Britain, the United States is the only place on earth where money means most.

In politics, our great accomplishment has been to turn our elections from entertaining liars' contests into tedious accountings of the amounts that Indonesian industrialists and Colombian coke dealers have to pony up for access to the press and the polls. One dispiriting revelation to emerge from the elections is that all those stories about Bill Clinton's legendary fondness for fast women and fast food seem to be nothing more than cynical attempts to humanize him. For what Bill really does, all the time and everywhere, is cadge money from people and then pose for trophy pictures with them in which one cannot tell the angler from the fish.

In reality, elections stopped being political events a long time ago. They are better described as venture capital projects. You put together a team of investors and entrepreneurs to exploit the U.S. government as if it were a gold mine in Peru. The team that wins the franchise gets to mine the ore and sell shares to others. As the shaft gets deeper, the price for access gets higher. In the Eisenhower years, there was tsk-tsk scandal when the lobbyist for the Widget Manufacturers Association bribed an Ike aide with a fur coat for his better half. Today, disparate peddlers of every sort of scam and substance casually drop off sacks of simoleons at the White House en route to their thereby sanctioned schemes.

Dear ITT Ideologist,

Speaking of the French, the media are telling me that it is time to loathe them again, including John le Carré, though only his name is French. *Pourquoi?*

—P. Salinger, Paris

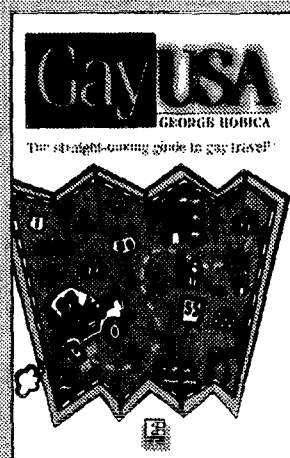
Dear Monsieur Salinger,

It's because Americans tend to be chubby and credulous, which is good for the media and marketers, while the Gauls and le Carré tend to be thin and skeptical, which are traits somewhat less hospitable to mindless consumerism. The French believe that sensible people neither eat between meals nor pay heed to politicians or commercials. Because

of this, French politicians need ideology and class warfare to gain attention, while French commercials rely on cleverness and nudity.

The French, however, do like government, despite the fact that it's the playpen of politicians. They believe that government keeps things orderly and tidy. It provides them with loads of civic and social goodies, not to mention millions of steady jobs in which even junior clerks get the privilege of acting like little Napoleons. Politicians, like taxes, are a price they grudgingly pay for government. Americans, of course, hate government and its bureaucrats, but are charmed by politicians, especially those who, however hypocritically, join them in hating government. The media dislike John le Carré because he dwells on such hypocrisies.

Both the French and le Carré are also detested as conspiracy theorists for holding the view that individuals and institutions of wealth and power are wont to do their business in private without due regard for the law. Americans prefer to be constantly surprised by such evidences. They therefore resent those who rub their noses in them. The latest cause for conflict, as you well know, is the case of TWA Flight 800. The French suspect an official cover-up, based partly on experience with previous incidents of the same sort and partly on their skeptical nature. Americans, on the other hand, expect a more satisfyingly dramatic resolution—which means pinning the rap for the tragedy on the cruelties either of foreigners or of fate.



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IN THE END The beltway bandits

By Pete Karman



Dear ITT Ideologist,

I presently have a very good job as chief law enforcement officer for a major superpower. There's lots of prestige and perks, but what it really boils down to is playing Claude Rains' part as Captain Renard in *Casablanca*. You know, he's the police chief who pretends to be shocked at gambling even as he pockets his winnings. I'm getting worried that my boss feels that I don't cut him enough slack in his increasingly questionable deals. But I can't quite figure whether he just wants an open door, or me out the door. What's your skinny?

—J. Reno, Washington, D.C.

Dear J.,

The problem is that your boss has a fatal flaw: He instills disloyalty by sucking up and kicking down far more than necessary. That means that when he drops into deep doodoo, his betters won't raise a finger while his lessers will give him the finger. Just consider the recent election. Even the people who voted for him distrusted him.

Your only real options are public scandal or private sector. So pack your blinders and your Zipf, and head back to Miami. You don't need the grief, and the tobacco companies pay top dollar for lawyers like you who have all the key passwords to Justice Department computers.

Dear ITT Ideologist,

The presidential election was so enervating that I actually called the winner a bore on the air. Why was this so?

—D. Brinkley, Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Brinkley,

For the same reason that lots of other things about America have turned boring:

Continued on page 39